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H. A. DE WEERD, *Editor*

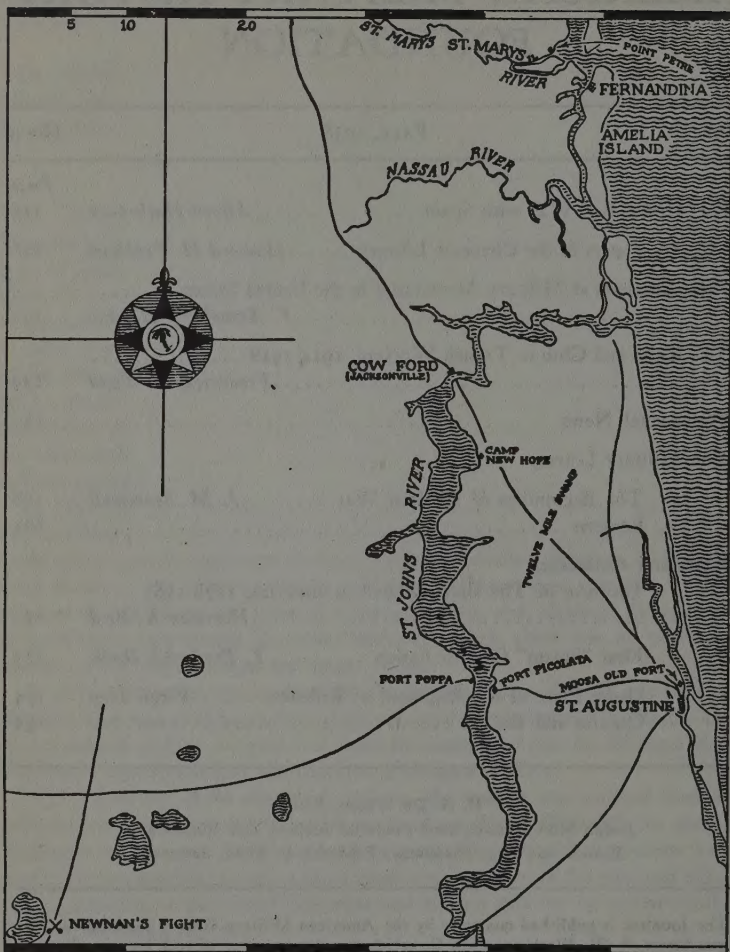
Joseph Mills Hanson, Siert Frederick Riepma, Don Russell and  
Branch Spalding, Associates; Frederick P. Todd, *Secretary*

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All correspondence should be addressed to *Frederick P. Todd, Secretary, Box 382, Benjamin Franklin Station, Washington, D. C.*

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EAST FLORIDA, 1811-1812

# OUR UNDECLARED WAR WITH SPAIN

• By Alfred Hasbrouck

“**I**T IS an episode in the general history of the nation which as an American citizen I could have wished might remain unwritten,” lamented United States District Judge Isaac H. Benson, “and although I feel gratified to observe that the United States promptly disavowed the proceedings and endeavored to retrace their steps and to remedy the wrong, so far as they could with due regard to the safety and rights of those compromised by the extraordinary course which had been taken by their agents and officers, yet” he continued plaintively, “they could not fully wipe out the stain or do away with the wrong which had been perpetrated towards the peaceable and unoffending subjects of a nation with which we were at peace.”<sup>1</sup> The good judge would probably have been even more upset had he realized that the episode of which he spoke, wherein a group of adventurers, with the tacit assistance of part of the United States Army, took it upon themselves to make a private war for the annexation of Florida, was a thoroughly American piece of insouciance which would be repeated in other places with better success for many years to come. His complaint, moreover, was merely a final ripple thrown up by one of the most colorful and ingenuous filibusters that ever came to pass on the American frontier.

It was on January 15, 1811, that Congress in secret session passed an act enabling the President to take possession of any part of Florida which might be under the hungry eye of England, before that nation could occupy some convenient inlet as a war base.<sup>2</sup> For this was when the clouds of war with England were gathering and the United States government feared that Spain, ever mindful of American yearnings for her tropical peninsula, might well permit that nation to seize a base of operations against the unruly western republic. Acting on the authority of the statute President Madison therefore appointed secret commissioners to negotiate with the Spanish local authorities for the cession of certain parts of the province of Florida; but, despite his magnanimous offer (and a courageous one) to return such territory to His Catholic Majesty as soon as John Bull's threat should have been dispelled, the Spanish governors of East and West Florida did not see fit to yield anything. Whereupon American initiative took matters into its own ready hands, and, while Andrew Jackson invaded west Florida, the “Patriots” from Georgia did the same thing in the eastern part of the province, with just as much dash and fervor if not quite as effectively, from the standpoint of immediate results. About these “Patriots,” indeed, revolves the whole story of our undeclared war with Spain.

<sup>1</sup> In *United States vs. Ferreira*, in *Senate Miscellaneous Documents*, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 55, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> James Cooper and Charles E. Sherman, *Secret Acts, Resolutions and Instructions under which East Florida was Invaded by the United States Troops, Naval Forces, and Volunteers in 1812 and 1813* (Washington, 1860), 3, 4.



Their authority to intervene came from above at least indirectly, for it was George Matthews, an ex-member of Congress from Georgia, a general of that state's militia, and one of the disappointed commissioners of President Madison, who promptly proceeded to create his own "local authorities" in East Florida to carry out his official duties in a quite unofficial way.<sup>3</sup> For his purposes there were at hand numerous rough and ready Georgia frontiersmen who resented the fact that their runaway slaves had obtained asylum in Spanish territory and who feared attacks from the Florida Indians, who also refused to stay quietly on their side of the border. Matthews himself was no man to stop at the bureaucratic quibbles of diplomacy; a rough, hot-tempered son of the new world, he lost little time in leading a band of from fifty to a hundred self-styled "East Florida Patriots" over the St. Marys River, proceeding to terrorize the astounded peaceful inhabitants, most of whom, although of English origin, were prospering well enough under the easy Spanish rule and did not perceive the advantages of independence as clearly as their less well-established neighbors from Georgia. But threats of confiscation or destruction of their property and of exile for themselves helped many of these colonists to see the justice of the Patriots' cause. Two such converts were of particular note. Ludovick Ashley, a wealthy lumberman of the St. Marys valley, agreed to furnish funds for the invading "army" and in return received assurances from General Matthews that his property would be protected, his religious inclinations unmolested, and his losses in the contemplated revolt made up out of the bounty of the Washington government; and, to cap it all, he was to receive the rank of colonel in the Patriots' army.<sup>4</sup> Another rich lumberman, one John McIntosh, consented to become "Director" of the projected "Republic of Florida." His was perhaps a more substantial personal reason, for he had suffered imprisonment in Havana and from that experience had carried away not only disloyalty but a hearty thirst for revenge.<sup>5</sup>

Under the leadership of these men (with General Matthews hovering importantly in the background) a paper republic was formed under which the self-appointed "local authorities" were to transfer their territory to the United States. In this efficient and republican manner East Florida was to be saved from Spanish despotism, and, to make sure of the triumph, Matthews, as United States commissioner, was authorized to call upon his native country for troops and warships to hold the land so transferred, especially if he believed there was danger of its occupation by England.<sup>6</sup> This the redoubtable general did. He ordered the commanding officer at Point Petre, the garrison nearest to St. Marys, Georgia, to send men to occupy the "liberated" sections of the erstwhile province of East

<sup>3</sup> U. S. *vs.* Ferreira, *op. cit.*, 36.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 (Testimony of Archibald Clarke); *Senate Executive Documents*, 48 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 158, pp. 12-13; East Florida Papers, Selected Papers, Box 410 (in Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.).

<sup>5</sup> Department of State, Territorial Papers, Florida, I, no. 98 (in The National Archives).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Florida. But Major Jacinth Laval, in charge of the post, was suspicious, and, worse, uncooperative; he did not interpret his orders to mean that he should invade foreign soil, and he declined to obey the commissioner. In reply Matthews actually tried to inveigle officers and men of the garrison to desert and join the Patriots, offering bribes of free land. But the Army was adamant. When it was decided that the Patriot army should attack the post of Fernandina on Amelia Island, Major Laval refused to have anything further to do with the ambitious general of Georgia militia, reported the reasons for his action to the War Department, advised the commander of the United States gunboats in the St. Marys River not to become involved in such unlawful proceedings, and forthwith disappeared from the course of events.<sup>7</sup>

The Navy, however, was apparently more concerned with the fate of Florida than Major Laval, or at least Commodore Hugh G. Campbell was. The Commodore, for reasons which can only be surmised, was interested in the Patriots and ordered his eight gunboats to anchor in the harbor of Fernandina with their guns pointing suggestively toward the town, the while he and his flagship sailed up and down the line firing blank charges and sending vigorous messages to the Spanish commandant to the effect that his force would act to prevent the bloodshed of those who were engaged in the struggle for independence, although he did not intend to use his vessels in the name of the United States.<sup>8</sup> In spite of this extraordinary quibble the commandant, Captain Justo López, could not quite understand how an American naval officer in command of American warships could use them in support of an insurgent attack without involving his country; and, whether convinced by the blank charges or the notes, but in any case feeling that Spanish honor would suffer less by yielding to a superior force of the United States than to the Patriot rabble, he offered to surrender. At this critical juncture the impetuous Campbell lost his nerve, decided not to become further involved, stressed the prevention of bloodshed as his motive, recalled previous orders not to fire unless fired upon, and gave his captains further orders not even to fire a shot on any pretext whatever. All this was too speedy for Captain López. Unaware of the change of face, and still confronted with the line of warships anchored in hostile array before the town, the commandant was unable to interpret Commodore Campbell's actions as anything else than support of the insurgents, especially when Matthews sent the threat that, if surrender were not forthcoming, "the U. S. fleet would blow the town down."<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile last-moment preparations for defense were being hastily made in Fernandina. The garrison of ten superannuated Spanish soldiers was augmented by the enlistment of volunteers, mostly British sympathizers with their Negro retainers. Sixteen obsolete, rusty cannon were dug up and mounted be-

<sup>7</sup> Cooper and Sherman, *Secret Acts*, 10-13.

<sup>8</sup> U. S. *vs.* Ferreira, *op. cit.*, 24 (Testimony of Winslow Foster).

<sup>9</sup> Cooper and Sherman, *Secret Acts*, 20.



hind a breastwork thrown together from bales of cotton. In the absence of cannon balls, nails and pieces of scrap iron were prepared for use as projectiles. Flintlocks of various sorts, pistols, and swords were issued to the undisciplined defenders, many of whom hastened to dispose of them to the neighboring colonists.<sup>10</sup>

When seven or eight large row boats, crowded with men, were seen to cross the river and land on a curving stretch of beach and swamp-land which provided an approach to the bluff on which Fernandina stood, the excited volunteers, swearing that they were ready to die in defense of their homes, urged that the invaders be fired upon. Captain López, however, who might have turned his untrained mob against that of Colonel Ashley with some chance of success, feared to do so when he saw the crews of the American warships running to quarters and the muzzles of their guns pointed toward him. "We must surrender; resistance would be unavailing," he muttered, and, suiting action to words, he sent out one of his men with a flag of truce and prepared to lower the ensign of Spain.<sup>11</sup>

The terms of capitulation to the Patriots permitted Captain López with his troops to march out of Fernandina with the honors of war, and guaranteed the rights of the inhabitants to their lives and property and the continuance of their right to cut lumber. It was also agreed that Amelia Island was to be handed over to the United States twenty-four hours after the Patriots received it. On St. Patrick's Day of 1812, therefore, General Matthews triumphantly relinquished the island to Lieutenant Ridgely, U. S. N., the Patriot flag was hauled down and at last the American flag raised in its stead. With justifiable pride Matthews wrote the Secretary of State that, during the interregnum, "not the least outrage was committed by the Patriots when they possessed the town of Fernandina."<sup>12</sup> This was perhaps not entirely the case, for, during the ceremony attending the surrender of the garrison, when Captain López, in accordance with the customs of war, handed his personal sword to Colonel Ashley, the latter gentleman, ignoring the further requirement of those customs, failed to return the weapon and "putting it on wore it ever after."<sup>13</sup>

In explanation of his conduct Commodore Campbell reported to the Secretary of the Navy that he had complied with the request of General Matthews because of the instructions from both the President and the Secretary which Matthews had shown him. He claimed that he had ordered his gunboats to take station off Fernandina "in a quiet and friendly manner" and that "the measure had the desired effect of preventing blood, which would inevitably have been the case with the loss of the town."<sup>14</sup> Professing similar doubts "about exceeding my instructions," Lieutenant Colonel Thomas A. Smith, who had relieved Major

<sup>10</sup> U. S. *vs.* Ferreira, *op. cit.*, 26.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19; Cooper and Sherman, *Secret Acts*, 20; Territorial Papers, I, no. 125.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, I, no. 109.

<sup>13</sup> U. S. *vs.* Ferreira, *op. cit.*, 22.

<sup>14</sup> Cooper and Sherman, *Secret Acts*, 21.

Laval at Point Petre, had invaded Spanish territory by sending one company of infantry and two of riflemen of the regular army to occupy Amelia Island. There being no buildings for the accommodation of these troops, they pitched their tents within the city of Fernandina. The regular army thus took the place in the history of the annexation of East Florida which had been denied it by Major Laval. As soon as the Americans had taken over, Matthews and the Patriots disappeared for the time being. Colonel Ashley led out his few hundred men ostensibly for an attack on St. Augustine.

Having crossed the St. Johns River at the Cowford (now Jacksonville) Colonel Ashley sent scouting detachments in all directions to gather supplies, drive in the stock, and overawe the inhabitants. Many of the latter were brought as prisoners into camp where they were terrorized into joining the Patriots.<sup>15</sup> On arrival within about three miles of St. Augustine, the "Army of the Republic" established camp at Moosa Old Fort where the men, dissatisfied with their commander, calmly deposed Ashley and elected in his place William Craig, a planter and ex-Spanish judge. The disgruntled Ashley forthwith abandoned the fortunes of the republic, withdrawing with his staff and many of the recruits who had been gathered at the raided plantations.

The colonel's departure was, however, more than compensated for by the fortuitous arrival of about thirty militia from the United States. Three days later Colonel Smith, with a hundred regulars, followed the Patriots as they advanced into the province and took possession. The regulars "marched in rear of the patriots and contributed much by their presence and countenance to the success of the patriots. Gen. Matthews accompanied the expedition and camped with the patriots."<sup>16</sup> The fortunes of both Patriots and Army were indeed running high. The country was taken over in a formal ceremony described by Zephaniah Kingsley, one of the victors: "A handsome oration was made by some patriot orator, offering the country to the United States; the Patriots' flag was then taken down and the U. S. colors elevated in its place with a speech from Col. Smith accepting the country for the United States and offering a pledge that he would keep it and defend it."<sup>17</sup> On arriving at Moosa Old Fort Colonel Smith, having received the place from the Patriots in the customary way, raised the American flag. This was apparently a source of considerable surprise and worry to the law-abiding Spanish governor, for the next morning a Spanish gunboat from St. Augustine sailed within range and opened fire on the fort, only to sail away without further hostilities as soon as it recognized the American flag.

Nevertheless the position of the unfortunate Colonel Smith was far from enviable, and he might well have recollected his pledge of acceptance with some embarrassment. With a force of only four officers and 109 men he suddenly found himself in hostile territory—the pine barrens and palmetto scrub of Florida

<sup>15</sup> U. S. *vs.* Ferreira, *op. cit.*, 15-16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 (Testimony of Archibald Clarke).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 (Testimony of Zephaniah Kingsley).



—expected to invest a stronghold garrisoned by 400 men who were awaiting reinforcements due almost any day from Havana. The American troops were poorly equipped with unserviceable arms and worn-out uniforms; they had no surgeon to care for their numerous sick; and, to make a bad situation almost impossible, their supply of rations could not be relied upon because of the difficulties and dangers of transport in Florida, and because the contractor who had agreed to supply them in Georgia was none too willing to incur the additional expense of making shipments into the young Republic to the south. The Patriots on whose behalf Colonel Smith had put himself into this awful position, and who had started him on his travels with such a magnificent display of enthusiasm, seemed suddenly to have lost interest in their own cause. Many of them returned to their homes and only a scant ninety-three still remained fit for duty.<sup>18</sup>

The situation was indeed a deplorable one from the point of view of this forlorn detachment of the United States Army. The orders under which Colonel Smith was acting emanated from a temporary civilian commissioner whose authority was doubtful and whose instructions were so vague and uncertain that Smith did not know what he was expected to do. He had invaded a country with which the United States was at peace. Would the War Department approve? He was threatening a superior force of potential enemies, which he must sooner or later either attack or repulse. Would General Matthews or the War Department send him the necessary reinforcements and keep him supplied with rations?<sup>19</sup> These were interesting, if belated, questions.

Above all, were the secret orders from Washington originally aimed to test the Spanish temper, to make a play for immediate annexation? The answer does not appear on the record, but it is perhaps not too farfetched an explanation of the predicament in which Colonel Smith found himself placed. Insofar as General Matthews by his machinations had led troops of the regular army into such a false position, the measures he had adopted had considerably embarrassed the administration and, upon the protests of the Spanish and British ministers, had to be disavowed. Therefore on April 4, 1812, Secretary Monroe sat down to write Matthews an apologetic letter. Instructions, the precipitate general was diplomatically informed, had been exceeded; but the President appreciated his zeal. As it had not been intended to take possession of East Florida without the consent of its governor, but as it had been done anyway, there was no longer occasion for his services as commissioner and he was to consider his powers revoked.<sup>20</sup> Matthews was so shocked and chagrined at this news that he died within the year, possibly from mortification and disappointment alone.

The relief of Matthews actually left Colonel Smith no better off than before, since Governor D. B. Mitchell of Georgia, who had been given the appointment of commissioner with instructions to return Amelia Island to the Spanish

<sup>18</sup> T. Frederick Davis, "United States Troops in Spanish East Florida," in *Florida Historical Quarterly*, IX (1930), 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>20</sup> *American State Papers, Foreign Relations* (Washington, 1932-61), III, 572.



authorities, together with such parts of East Florida as had been taken from them, was simply directed to employ his "efforts to the restoration of that state of things in the province, which existed before the late transactions." Yet the government realized that Patriots who had been deluded by Matthews into believing that the United States would defend them must not now be abandoned to the vengeance of the Spanish authorities, whatever it thought of the somewhat similar position of Colonel Smith.<sup>21</sup> The attempts of Governor Mitchell to arrange with the Spanish Governor, Sebastian Kindelan y Oregan, for restoring previous conditions had been met by the latter's refusal to treat further with regard to amnesty for the Patriots until all United States troops should be withdrawn. Then, in spite of having allowed eleven days for this withdrawal, Kindelan, before the expiration of that period, had ordered an attack to be made on Fort Moosa.<sup>22</sup> The American offensive thus quickly became defensive.

On the morning of May 16, 1812, Colonel Smith observed an armed schooner and four launches filled with men, each mounting a six-pounder, entering the creek on which Fort Moosa was situated and evidently preparing to attack. At that time the building called Fort Moosa was occupied only as an outpost, while the main body of United States troops was encamped a few hundred yards in the rear. Having sent supports to Moosa, Smith gave orders to the sergeant in charge to retreat if the enemy's balls penetrated the walls of the building, but to leave fifteen men in ambush. Under the protection of a heavy fire from the schooner the boats advanced and soon shot and shell were riddling the walls of the building occupied by the picket. When in accordance with orders the detachment abandoned the building, the Spaniards, deceived by the stratagem, dashed cheering after them and would undoubtedly have been annihilated had not the non-commissioned officer in charge of the ambushade opened fire too soon, instead of letting the enemy stumble into the trap. This inept subordinate then abandoned his position, permitting the attackers to renew their cannonade and set fire to Moosa. Although the firing had continued from eleven in the morning until four in the afternoon, the Americans suffered no casualties in this affair. After the Spaniards had reembarked and returned toward St. Augustine, Colonel Smith removed his encampment about a mile to the rear of its former position, and wrote urging that rations and reinforcements be forwarded at once and that he be authorized to return the attack.<sup>23</sup>

Following an exchange of protests and recriminations between the two governors, a deadlock ensued which seemed to favor the plans of Mitchell for using United States troops for the benefit of his own state. The Indians of Florida, by raiding across the border, destroying plantations, driving off cattle and seizing

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 572-73.

<sup>22</sup> Cooper and Sherman, *Secret Acts*, 36; East Florida Papers, Selected Papers, 1812, Box 410 (Mitchell to Governor of East Florida; Governor of East Florida to Governor of Georgia).

<sup>23</sup> Davis, *op. cit.*, no. 1, p. 14.

slaves, and then escaping into their fastnesses in the swamps, had long been a source of worry. To put a stop to these depredations had been an impossible undertaking while the lax control of Spanish authority was in force; but now that regular troops were already across the line Mitchell envisaged two solutions to this old problem. He might order Colonel Smith to complete the capture of the province from Spain and thus bring the situation under federal control, or he might utilize the Army to attack and destroy the Indian settlements. He therefore instructed Smith to wait where he was until further orders "unless compelled to retire by a superior force."<sup>24</sup> The excuse for a war against the Indians was not long in coming.

One of Smith's supply trains, while proceeding at night through Twelve Mile Swamp, had been ambushed and attacked by a party of fifty or sixty Negro soldiers from St. Augustine and some Florida Indians who had sided with their Spanish masters against the American invaders. Captain Williams, in command of the wagon train, had given the order to charge when he was wounded in eight places and was carried to the rear by Captain Fort of the Milledgeville Volunteers. Although himself wounded in the knee, Fort assumed command and at the second volley "the Indians fled, yelling like devils." At the end of twenty-five minutes, however, the Negroes were in possession of all the wagons, and had left on the field one American non-commissioned officer killed, Captain Williams mortally wounded, and Captain Fort and six privates severely wounded.<sup>25</sup> This affair was sufficient excuse for Governor Mitchell to begin his war against the Indians, and caused Colonel Smith to establish his main camp on the St. Johns River at a point about ten miles above the Cowford, where he erected a fortified post significantly called New Hope.

Having received authority from his state legislature to use whatever means he had to protect the state, Governor Mitchell accepted the offer of Inspector General of Militia, Colonel Daniel Newnan, to raise a force of three-months volunteers against the Seminole Indians in Florida. Colonel Newnan, having been ordered to report to Colonel Smith at New Hope, was eventually ready with a command of 117, composed of eighty-four of his own men whose three months term of service had expired but who had volunteered to remain through the expedition, twenty-three volunteer militia sent by Colonel Smith, and nine patriots under Captain Cone. On the evening of September 24, the expedition set out against the Lotchaway [Elachua] Indian towns which were under Chiefs Payne and Bowleg—these last two having formed an alliance with the Spaniards.<sup>26</sup>

On the morning of the fourth day, when within seven miles of the Lotchaway

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, II.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3, pp. 138, 141.

<sup>26</sup> Cooper and Sherman, *Secret Acts*, 45-46; Territorial Papers, Florida, II, nos. 214-19, 221; East Florida Papers, Pensacola, Appalacha Indians, Box no. 115; Davis, *op. cit.*, no. 3, p. 148.



towns, the Americans encountered the Indians, but becoming entangled in the swamps were unable to attack the towns. Although Chief Payne had been killed, the Indians, reenforced by Negroes, surrounded the Americans and kept up the battle until after nightfall. Having sent one of his captains back to the St. Johns for supports, Colonel Newnan concentrated his small force inside a breastwork, which he had constructed of logs and earth, and withstood a siege of seven or eight days, fully protected from the fire of the enemy but suffering severely from hunger. In spite of his intention to hold out by eating his horses, until help should arrive, Colonel Newnan was forced by mutiny among his officers and increasing sickness as well to abandon his fort.

Owing to weakness from hunger and sickness and to the necessity of carrying the wounded in litters only eight miles were covered during the night before another stand had to be made for a rest. The retreat had begun at an unfortunate time, for horsemen with provisions arrived at the breastworks, but, finding them abandoned, returned to the St. Johns again without having encountered those whom they had been sent to succor.<sup>27</sup> After several more days and nights of struggling through dense woods and almost impenetrable swamps, and halting to withstand attacks, Colonel Newnan and his men were found by a rescue party coming with provisions. The rescuers helped the unfortunate Newnan and his men reach a gunboat on the St. Johns, and by this route finally to arrive at the comparative shelter of New Hope. This expedition had been fruitless, since the Seminoles, although weakened by the loss of King Payne, continued their raids on white settlers.

In a report Governor Mitchell saw fit to declare that "papers captured from the Indians" showed that the Spanish expected "assistance from the British. If so," he added, "is not this equal to an attempt to occupy East Florida and an excuse for us to seize it?" More pointedly, "in order to protect Georgia from raids by Seminoles it is better for us to attack them in their homes, hence to invade Florida."<sup>28</sup> This interesting proposal, however, could not be carried through. After having succeeded for thirteen months in delaying his own purposes, Mitchell had become ill and had retired to his home in Milledgeville, leaving the army officers in Florida without any definite instructions as to their duties. After a bill authorizing the occupation of East Florida had failed in the Senate on July 3, 1812, Mitchell was told that the President thought it advisable to withdraw the troops at long last.

Regardless of the Governor's excited protest against this step "as a measure fraught with danger to the Southern states," Secretary Monroe finally revoked Mitchell's authority while assuring him that his conduct of his mission "had the entire approbation and thanks of the President." Since it was desirable to

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 149-55.

<sup>28</sup> Territorial Papers, Florida, II, nos. 240-42.

secure better coordination by having military and diplomatic affairs on the Florida border both in the same hands, Mitchell's powers were thereupon transferred to General Thomas Pinckney, then in command of the Southern District of the United States Army with headquarters at Charleston.<sup>29</sup>

This time the command of the East Florida expedition had been entrusted to a military man who knew how to obey orders. Monroe, at that time acting as Secretary of War as well as of State, gave Pinckney to understand that he must withdraw the United States troops, but not until he had been assured that the Spanish subjects who had been engaged in revolutionary activities should not be molested on that account. This happy end should be effected by amicable arrangements with the local authorities and force should not be resorted to except in the contingency of an attempt by some foreign power to occupy a part of the country.<sup>30</sup> Thus did the fundamental idea back of the whole East Florida experience—the necessity of keeping England out of the peninsula—again make its appearance.

General Pinckney promptly entered into negotiations with Governor Kindelan, informing him that it was the intention of the President to remove the Army from East Florida as soon as amnesty and protection from reprisals were guaranteed the insurgents. As heretofore Governor Kindelan strenuously objected to giving any definite promises while the troops remained in occupation, except that he would comply with the general pardon granted by King Ferdinand. As this did not satisfy those who had everything to lose from Spanish retaliation, negotiations were continued for three months longer.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile certain of the Patriots under Judge Craig, who had formed a provisional government for the Territory (the Republic) of East Florida appealed to General Pinckney not to withdraw his troops, reminding him that "the Patriots who revolted against Spain did so on the understanding from General Matthews that they would be protected by the United States."<sup>32</sup> In justice to them, Pinckney asked Kindelan that an extension of time for the acceptance of the amnesty be granted to the Patriots, in order that they might harvest their crops and remove their property from Florida. To this the Spanish governor replied that he was willing to allow those who refused the amnesty to designate "during the period of the present crop, persons in whom this Government can place confidence" to take charge of their plantations and to export provisions and removable property on payment of the usual export duties "on the sole condition that they will never return to this territory."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812* (New York, 1925), 194, 211; Cooper and Sherman, *Secret Acts*, 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 61; Territorial Papers, Florida, II, no. 262.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, III, no. 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 51.



Thus it finally seemed possible to call back the troops without leaving deluded and deserted Patriots unprotected by promises of fair treatment. Arrangements were made between General Pinckney and Governor Kindelan, through their aides-de-camp, for the evacuation of New Hope on April 29, and of Amelia Island on May 6, 1813. By planning to have the Spanish troops march in before the Americans marched out, it was hoped that disorders and wanton destruction would be prevented. Orders were sent by General Pinckney to his two commanding officers to take the road back, but with the comforting warning that "the removal of troops from East Florida is not to be considered in the light of evacuation of enemy's territory, but as restoring to a state of neutrality a territory which our executive deemed expedient to occupy until the government of that territory should comply with a reasonable requisition." He further added the precautionary order to "prevent the removal or destruction of anything pertaining" to enemy property.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately for these idealizations, Major Lawrence Manning, who had succeeded Colonel Smith in command of the troops at New Hope, mistook the date April 29 for April 26 and abandoned camp before the Spanish soldiers had arrived to take over. As the Americans marched out "some ill disposed persons set fire to the temporary barracks and neighboring buildings, the gin and other houses of the planters Hollingsworth & Craig."<sup>35</sup> This disappointed the Spanish soldiers who had expected to use the ill-starred barracks.

On May 6 Captain A. A. Massias, who had been in command of the tiny garrison at Fernandina, withdrew from Amelia Island leaving East Florida free of American troops. This remained the case until December 23, 1817, when Major James Bankhead of the Artillery and a supporting naval force chased out the French Pirate Luis Aury, and incidentally established a United States garrison at Fernandina until the whole territory was ceded in 1819.<sup>36</sup>

In this robust fashion was the road paved for the purchase of Florida. Whether the accomplishment of that event was more due to the enthusiastic filibustering of the Patriots or the energetic maneuvering of the Army than to the bickerings of diplomatists is not a question that can be exactly answered; but there is little doubt that such characters as Matthews, Ashley, Smith, Mitchell, Craig and Pinckney greatly facilitated it. The curious mixture of patriotism, interest, defense, and frontier democracy which they represented thus worked itself out, eventually, as they wished; England did not get her Florida sea base and another star was added to the flag of the Union.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 23; Davis, *op. cit.*, x, no. 1, pp. 30-33.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34; Territorial Papers, Florida, III, nos. 10, 43.

<sup>36</sup> *House Executive Documents*, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 47, pp. 3, 7, 11, 18-20. The interesting and amusing story of the seizure of Amelia Island by the Scotch adventurer, Gregor MacGregor, in June, 1817, and its transfer to Aury is fully related in T. Frederick Davis, "MacGregor's Invasion of Florida, 1817", in *Florida Historical Quarterly*, VII (1928), no. 1.

# MILITARY PAPERS IN THE CLEMENTS LIBRARY

*By Howard H. Peckham*

**W**HEN the late William L. Clements, steel manufacturer and university regent, presented to the University of Michigan the collection of rare Americana which he had painstakingly gathered over many years, it consisted of books, newspapers, maps, and one group of manuscripts, all relating to the history of this continent from the time of its discovery to about the year 1800. The building which he had erected to house this collection was dedicated in June, 1923, as the William L. Clements Library.

The one manuscript collection comprised the papers of Lord Shelburne, who had been president of the British Board of Trade in 1763, a secretary of state from 1766 to 1768, and prime minister in 1782 and 1783, during the peace negotiations with the American colonies. Shelburne's long interest in America led him to collect much information on it of a military, political, and commercial nature.

From the date of the opening of the Library until his death in 1934 Mr. Clements continued to make additions to the contents of the Library, bending his efforts particularly toward acquiring manuscripts of the Revolutionary period. It was immediately apparent to him that he could not hope to make a collection of the papers of the American statesmen and generals of that conflict because those manuscripts had been largely disposed of generations ago to the Library of Congress or to historical societies in the East. He thereupon conceived the idea, inspired no doubt by his possession of the Shelburne Papers, of obtaining the papers of the statesmen and generals on the British side in the Revolution. In a few short years he accumulated a remarkably well-integrated collection of papers covering Anglo-American relations in the period from 1745 to 1785. At the same time Mr. Clements acquired some collections dating beyond this period, and he also managed to obtain a considerable portion of an American general's papers. The University Library in Ann Arbor itself added several manuscript collections to its holdings for the eighteenth century.

Viewed as a whole, the Library is a special collection of source materials on American history. It was Mr. Clements' aim to bring together contemporary accounts of our history in the making; he sought the eye-witness narratives in books, pamphlets, letters, newspapers, and even maps, produced contemporaneously with events. He was anxious that such valuable and fragile records should be used only by those scholars appreciating their worth, and for that reason it is expected that readers shall be capable of doing historical research and shall have exhausted secondary publications, available in public libraries, bearing on



No. 1000.

[illegible]

## THE ORDER TO MARCH ON CONCORD

Draft of General Gage's Instructions, in His Own Hand, to Lt. Col. Smith, Dated  
April 18, 1775 (*From the Gage Papers*)

their topic before requesting admittance to the Clements Library. Most, but not all, of the manuscript collections are military papers, and only these will be described here. Particular campaigns with which they deal may be ascertained from the description and the inclusive dates they cover. The papers can be best treated separately and chronologically, as follows:

WARREN PAPERS. With the Gage Papers (see below) there came a pack of Admiral Sir Peter Warren's papers relating to King George's War, particularly the siege of Louisburg in 1745 at which he was naval commander. The papers are his correspondence and military accounts. There are about four volumes in bulk, dating from 1745 to 1749.

CLINTON PAPERS, GEORGE. These are a considerable portion of the official correspondence of George Clinton, governor of New York from 1743 to 1753. The military section of the papers concerns Clinton's efforts to organize expeditions to invade Canada during King George's War, in 1746 and in 1747. In both instances the legislature refused to appropriate funds for the troops. The papers fill twenty-two volumes, and the outside dates are 1703 and 1768.

**MILDMAY PAPERS.** Although not strictly military in character, this collection contains the aftermath of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748. William Mildmay and William Shirley were commissioned by Great Britain in January 1749/50 to settle the boundaries of Nova Scotia with France, the right to the islands of St. Lucia, Tobago, St. Vincent, and Dominica, the accounts of prizes recently taken at sea, and the exchange of prisoners. Negotiations lasted for years. The seven volumes cover the period 1748-1756 and consist of letterbooks, memoranda of conferences, etc.

**GERMAIN PAPERS.** The secretary of state for colonies throughout the Revolution was Lord George Germain, also known as Lord Sackville. The rebellious colonies were a problem in his department, and he had control to a surprising degree over the military commanders. It was Germain who devised the plan by which General Burgoyne was to march down Lake Champlain from Montreal and General Howe was to march up the Hudson from New York, the two armies to meet near Albany. And it was Germain who was responsible chiefly for the miscarriage of the plan. His interference in military affairs was as disastrous as his civil administration was muddled. His papers consist of his correspondence with the commanders in America and with other ministers. They comprise about twenty volumes and are calendared in the report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission on the Stopford-Sackville manuscripts (two volumes, 1904 and 1910). They are concentrated in the period 1775-82, with some family papers of an earlier date. A booklet descriptive of the collection is available from the Library. There are twenty-two manuscript maps of North America in the papers.

**KNOX PAPERS.** Lord Germain's undersecretary of state was William Knox, who had held that office since 1770. His correspondence dovetails with Germain's papers and largely concerns America. It is calendared in the Historical Manuscripts Commission *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, volume VI. The papers fill eleven volumes.

**AMHERST PAPERS.** The bulk of Sir Jeffrey Amherst's papers is deposited in the Public Record Office, London. When Amherst returned to England in November, 1763, after bringing the French and Indian War to a victorious close (except for Pontiac's uprising) he turned over the command of the troops to General Thomas Gage. With the transfer of authority he left with Gage many papers dealing with unfinished business. These make up seven volumes and include (1) various letters and petitions addressed to Amherst, who probably had referred them to Gage from time to time; (2) Amherst's letters to Gage, particularly while he was governor of Montreal; and (3) letters addressed to Amherst which arrived in New York after he had sailed. The inclusive date of the papers is 1758 to 1764.

**HAY DIARY.** This journal was kept by Lieutenant Jehu Hay, an officer of the garrison under Major Henry Gladwin, at Detroit during the siege by Pontiac. It extends from May 1, 1763 to June 6, 1765, covering 212 pages. It is the best account available of the daily happenings there during that trying time. The diary was edited (the author then being unknown) by Franklin B. Hough and published by J. Munsell in 1860 under the title *Diary of the Siege of Detroit in the War With Pontiac*.

**GAGE PAPERS.** General Gage commanded the British forces in North America from 1763 to 1775, returning home in October of the latter year. His was a peace-time administration except for the outbreak of the Revolution. The papers comprise his correspondence with the ministers in England in regard to colonial policies, with the colonial governors, and with the officers commanding districts, forts, and detachments scattered around North America. In every instance we have the retained office copies of Gage's letters, and the actual letters he received. Late in 1773 Gage went on furlough to England and returned in 1774 with another commission as governor of Massachusetts Bay. The main happenings of his command were the pacification of the Indians, the occupation of the West, the Stamp Act and its reverberations, the Boston "Massacre," the Boston Tea Party, and the battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. Gage's duties were not easy and he was conscientious in carrying them out; and as a result the cumbersome machinery by which a standing army was maintained is fully exposed by his papers. He came to America in 1755 and commanded the van in General Braddock's defeat. The collection dates from that year to 1785. It numbers about 175 volumes. With the papers are eighty manuscript maps of forts, rivers, and sections of the country, drawn by British engineers.



**SYDNEY PAPERS.** Thomas Townshend, 1st Viscount Sydney, was a lord of the treasury 1766-67, joint-paymaster of the forces in 1768, an opponent of Lord North throughout the Revolution, secretary at war in 1782, and home secretary 1782-89. His correspondence relative to America is concerned principally with England's colonial policies. As secretary at war he had the task of transporting the defeated army back to England. His papers fill fifteen volumes, many of which deal with his duties as home secretary. They extend throughout the eighteenth century.

**HOWE ORDERLY BOOK.** A large folio volume contains daily orders issued at General Sir William Howe's headquarters from January 27, 1776 to May 1, 1778, with no entries for the period April 28 to August 2, 1776. The identity of the aide who kept the book is not known.

**GATES ORDERLY BOOK.** A book of daily orders kept at Valley Forge headquarters of the Continental Army, from January 20 to February 22, 1778. The journal was probably kept for General Gates' headquarters, but the writer is unknown.

**BRADDISH ORDERLY BOOK.** An orderly book kept at the headquarters of General John Sullivan in Providence by Major David Braddish from August 16, 1778 to April 3, 1779.

**CLINTON PAPERS, SIR HENRY.** When Gage was recalled in 1775 he was succeeded as commander by Sir William Howe, who in turn was succeeded by Sir Henry Clinton in 1778. The latter remained in command until 1782. Clinton had been in America since 1775 as a major-general. His papers, therefore, offer a continuous history of the military actions of the Revolution from Bunker Hill to the skirmishes after Yorktown. From 1778 on they constitute the British Headquarters papers. Much new light is thrown on the Burgoyne disaster, the Arnold treason, the Yorktown defeat, and the jealousies among Clinton's staff. The papers consist of letters, orders, memoranda, war council minutes, military returns, intelligence, intercepted mail, etc. In bulk they run to about 250 volumes, and are concentrated in the years of the war. With them are more than 350 manuscript maps and sketches of forts and battles. A descriptive list of them is available from the Library in book form.

**VON JUNGKERN PAPERS.** Correspondence and diaries of the Hessian officers who were employed by the British during the Revolution make up this collection. The letters were directed to Baron Von Jungkern, general and war minister of Hesse, and in addition to describing their engagements the officers criticize the British as freely as they do the Americans. There are also several German muster rolls. The papers relating to the Philadelphia campaign have been translated and published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (October-April, 1935-36); and those concerning the siege of Charleston have been published by the University of Michigan Press in a volume entitled *The Siege of Charleston*, translated by Bernhardt Uhlendorf. The papers fill seven volumes and date from 1775 to 1784.

**SIMCOE PAPERS.** Correspondence of Lieutenant Colonel John Graves Simcoe relating to the exploits of the Queen's Rangers, which he commanded from 1777 to 1781, and to his administration as lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, 1791-96. There are two volumes of material containing seven maps and sketches, and dating from 1774 to 1824.

**VAUGHAN PAPERS.** Correspondence relating to the conduct of the Revolutionary War in the West Indies, addressed to Sir John Vaughan while he commanded the British Army in the Leeward Islands. Under him were the officers commanding at Antigua, St. Christopher's, St. Lucia, Barbadoes, and Tobago. The papers extend from 1779 to 1781 and fill three volumes.

**WRAY PAPERS.** Little is known of George Wray. He was in America under Gage's command and during the Revolution he acted as commissary of the Royal Regiment of Artillery in America. His papers comprise ten volumes, dating from 1765 to 1782.

**CONTINENTAL ARMY RECORD.** A huge folio volume of ninety-eight leaves containing a statistical record of the army under General George Washington from March 7, 1778 to August 16, 1783. It shows by states the exact strength of the Continental Army by week and month, including the artillery and cavalry, and the sick, prisoners of war, men on leave, etc. There are two returns for the southern army under General Nathanael Greene in 1780. Presumably this record was kept for the adjutant-general. The last leaf is signed by Edward Hand, adjutant-general, who had succeeded Alexander Scammel to that office in January, 1781.

**GREENE PAPERS.** This correspondence of General Nathanael Greene, Washington's ablest general, relates to his southern campaign against Lord Cornwallis. The British side is related in the Sir Henry Clinton Papers. Greene took the field in 1780 after having acted as quartermaster-general, and by brilliant maneuvering kept Cornwallis from gaining anything but empty victories. Retreating northward, Greene led him to Yorktown, where he was bottled up and forced to surrender to the combined American and French armies. The papers fill sixty volumes and date from 1775 to 1786.

**SUMNER PAPERS.** Correspondence of Brigadier-General Jethro Sumner while he was commanding a brigade of militia in North Carolina and acting against Lord Cornwallis. In October, 1780, Sumner resigned his command and did not resume active service until the following summer. The two volumes date from August 24, 1780 to April 1, 1781.

**SHELburne PAPERS.** These were mentioned in an earlier paragraph. They comprise 163 volumes, of which fifty-six are concerned with American affairs. They are calendared in the Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports 3, 5 and 6. In addition there are fifteen maps of parts of America.

**HARTLEY PAPERS.** Like the Mildmay Papers, this collection is primarily a diplomatic correspondence. David Hartley was the agent of Charles James Fox, who succeeded Lord Shelburne late in 1783, for negotiating the treaty of peace with Benjamin Franklin in Paris. These letters detail the day-to-day progress of the negotiations, and are addressed to Fox and to his successor, Lord Carmarthen. Hartley's instructions from them also are here. There are five volumes, dating from 1783 to 1785.

**HARMAR PAPERS.** These comprise the military and personal papers of Brigadier-General Josiah Harmar, officer of Pennsylvania troops under Washington and later under Greene, and commander of the first United States Army, 1785-1791, stationed along the Ohio River to guard the Northwest frontier. His duties in the latter capacity were to make peace with the Indians, expel settlers on Indian lands north of the Ohio, and take over posts evacuated by the British. His expedition against the Miami Indians under Little Turtle in 1790 having failed to end raids on border settlements, Harmar was superseded by Arthur St. Clair and resigned in 1791. From 1793 to 1799 he acted as adjutant general of the Pennsylvania Militia, taking part in suppressing the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. His papers fill forty volumes and bulk largest for the years 1784-1800. With them are twenty-two manuscript maps of forts, districts of Pennsylvania, and land holdings of Harmar. A pamphlet describing the collection is available from the Library.

As these collections are cataloged in full or in considerable part, no attempt has been made to list the names of the principal correspondents. Among the "Miscellaneous Manuscripts" are separate letters from officers and soldiers of military interest. Information on whether the Library has letters written by particular persons may be obtained by addressing an inquiry to the Director, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

# FIRST ATTEMPTS AT MILITARY AERONAUTICS IN THE UNITED STATES

By F. Stansbury Haydon

THE application of aeronautics to military tactics remained practically unknown in the United States until the Civil War. Although the science of penetrating and navigating the upper air attracted attention very soon after the successful experiments of the Montgolfiers and Charles in France toward the close of the eighteenth century, its adaptation to warfare was slow to develop in America. One of the first Americans to mention the balloon as a possible military instrument was the versatile Benjamin Franklin, who referred to the subject as early as 1783 in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society.<sup>1</sup> Several months later he again mentioned this topic in his correspondence, pointing out the value of the balloon as a possible weapon of invasion.<sup>2</sup> Franklin may have been an exception in this respect among his fellow countrymen; but of course this cannot be proved, as there may have been many private letters that will never be published expressing views on the subject. But these two letters are the only documentary evidence disclosed by careful search indicating that the balloon was considered in the light of military value by Americans in the early period of experiments in aeronautics.<sup>3</sup> No series of pamphlets and tracts appeared in America comparable to those published in Europe recommending the newly invented apparatus for war purposes;<sup>4</sup> nor were there in this country any noticeable number of suggestions offered to the War Department involving the trial and adoption of balloons.<sup>5</sup> As far as can be discovered from available source material, only two serious attempts were made to interest the government in the use of military balloons throughout the seventy-odd years from the

<sup>1</sup> Franklin to Banks, November 21, 1783, in John Bigelow (ed.), *The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1888), VIII, 377.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin to John Ingenhausz, January 16, 1784, in *ibid.*, 432-33.

<sup>3</sup> At the time these letters were written, Franklin was living in France, and may have been influenced by opinion that had already been expressed there. André Vilette had written to a prominent French newspaper on October 20, 1783, pointing out the military value of the newly invented balloon. (*Journal de Paris*, October 26, 1783.)

<sup>4</sup> Among such tracts published in Europe and recommending balloons for military use were: *The Air Balloon: Or A Treatise on The Aerostatic Globe, Lately Invented by the Celebrated Mons. Montgolfier, of Paris* (London, 1783), attributed to William Cooke; Anonymous, *L'art de la guerre changée par l'usage de machines aérostatiques* (Paris, 1784); Thomas Martyn, *Hints of Important Uses to be Derived from Aerostatic Globes* (London [?], 1784); John Money, *A Short Treatise on the Use of Balloons and Field Observateurs in Military Operations* (London, 1808); Charles Rogier, *A Word for My King and Country: A Treatise on the Use of Rocket Armament, assisted by Balloons* (London, 1819); and many others.

<sup>5</sup> A number of suggestions were made to the French government recommending the use of balloons for military purposes during the early period of the wars of the French



Montgolfiers' invention to the opening of sectional hostilities in 1861. Both of these, coming nearly a half-century after the creation of the balloon companies with the Revolutionary armies in France,<sup>6</sup> were rejected by the military authorities.

It was the Seminole War in Florida that produced the first official recommendation to employ balloons with American forces. Hostilities, begun in 1835 over the removal of the Seminoles to the west had dragged on for several years despite the combined efforts of a large force of regular troops and militia to compel the Indians to submission.<sup>7</sup> The continuation of the war without apparent prospect of conclusion led a Colonel John H. Sherburne in 1840 to suggest to Secretary of War Joel Poinsett that balloons be assigned for service with the Government forces in Florida.<sup>8</sup> Sherburne had personal knowledge of the Indians, as well as the terrain involved in operations against them, having served in 1837 on a delegation sent to treat with the rebellious tribes on terms of peace.<sup>9</sup> He could thus discuss the Seminole affair with some color of authority.

The difficulty of locating the elusive bands of hostile red men, Sherburne claimed, was largely responsible for the failure of the army to bring the war to a close.<sup>10</sup> For this reason he presented his plan to the War Department as a means of solving the problem, and the scheme involved was not without some merit. He recommended that a balloon be attached to each column operating

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Revolution. See *Archives parlementaires* (1st Series, 1789-1799) LXXVI, 309, 631, 632; *Le Moniteur*, October 12 and 18, 1793; Camille Richard, *Le comité de salut public et les fabrications de guerre sous la Terreur* (Paris, 1921), 618, ff.; A. Aulard, *Recueil des actes de comité de salut public* (Paris, 1899, et. seq.) VI, 325. The British War Office likewise received similar suggestions early in the nineteenth century, during the war in the Crimea, and during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Cf. Money's tract, cited above; Henry Coxwell, *My Life and Balloon Experiences* (London, 1889), 2-5; Charles F. Snowden Gamble, *The Air Weapon* (London, 1931), I, 42; G. E. Grover, "On the Uses of Balloons in Military Operations," *In Papers Connected with the Duties of the Corps of Royal Engineers*, N. S. XII (1863), 73 ff.; Maj. General Whitworth Porter, *History of the Corps of Royal Engineers* (London, 1889), II, 190-92.

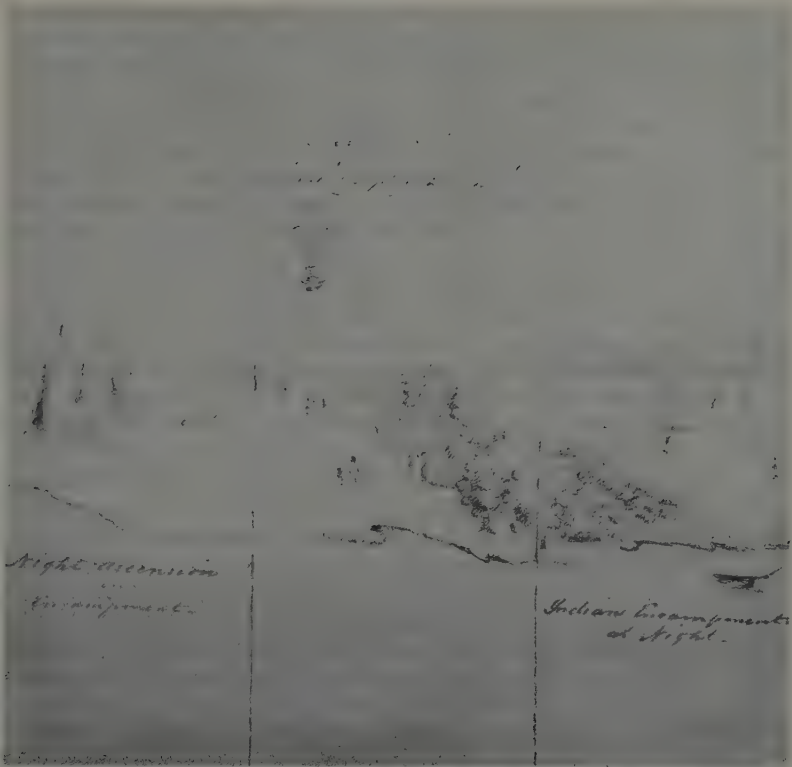
<sup>6</sup> Two regularly organized companies of military balloonists operated with the French armies from 1794 to 1799. See Jean-Marie-Joseph Coutelle, *Sur l'aérostat employée aux armées de Sambre-et-Meuse et du Rhin* (Paris, n.d.); Albert Joseph de Selle de Beauchamp, *Mémoires d'un officier des aérostats aux armées de 1793 à 1799* (Paris, 1850); F. Létonné, "Les aérostats militaires pendant les guerres de la révolution," in *Revue de génie militaire*, XXV (1903); G. Tissandier, *Histoire des ballons* (Paris, 1887).

<sup>7</sup> For a full narrative of the war, see John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (New York, 1848). A summary of the military operations and policy appears in Emory Upton, *The Military Policy of the United States* (Washington, 1904).

<sup>8</sup> Sherburne to Poinsett, September 8, 1840, Misc. File No. 284 (in Old Records Division, Adjutant General's Office, War Department, Washington. Hereinafter cited as ORD MSS.).

<sup>9</sup> General T. S. Jesup to Poinsett, November 20, 1837, in *American State Papers* (Washington, 1832-1861), *Military Affairs*, VII, 887.

<sup>10</sup> This assertion is given some weight by statements in the report of General Scott, April 30, 1836, in *ibid.*, VII, 278, and in Upton, *Military Policy*, 173.



Drawing Illustrating Sherburne's Plan, Submitted With His Letter to Secretary Poinsett, September 8, 1840. (Misc. File No. 284, ORD, AGO.)

against the Indians. By making night ascensions unknown to the enemy, the location of their camps could be accurately determined by observing the camp-fires, and with instruments, their direction and distance would be calculated. Forces could then be sent out to surround and surprise the encampments; resistance would thereby be effectually reduced, and the war concluded.<sup>11</sup> Sherburne further asserted that despite the wooded country involved, the light of fires could be detected from the air. Since the ascensions were to be made under cover of darkness, the element of surprise was insured, for the Indians would not be aware that their camps were being observed in this manner.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Sherburne to Poinsett, Sept. 8, 1840, MS, Misc. File No. 284, ORD, MSS.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

Secretary Poinsett promptly acknowledged the suggestion and promised to give the plan his consideration.<sup>13</sup> Sherburne, however, seems to have been confident of its adoption, and proceeded to make preliminary arrangements to procure the necessary apparatus. He later wrote to Poinsett announcing that he had located, after some difficulty, a balloon maker who had for sale a complete set of equipment for the price of \$600.<sup>14</sup> The individual offering the equipment turned out to be the pioneer aeronaut and scientist Charles Ferson Durant, whose ascensions and experiments in the 1830's had gained for him the reputation of being the first professional American aeronaut.<sup>15</sup> Durant had also agreed to make an additional balloon and appendages for \$900, and had committed the offer in writing at Sherburne's request.<sup>16</sup> The Colonel also remarked by way of persuasion that he had laid the plan confidentially before the former Secretary of War, Benjamin F. Butler,<sup>17</sup> for his consideration and opinion. Butler, he claimed, was highly enthusiastic over the idea, and was quoted as having said that he thought the plan was "the best that the Secretary can adopt in the present state of things in Florida."<sup>18</sup> It was further stated that arrangements for rapid inflation in the field were available, a consideration of primary importance if balloon operations should be attempted. Sherburne concluded by offering to take charge of the equipment, deliver it to the army in Florida, and instruct the necessary officers in its use.<sup>19</sup>

To this communication Poinsett replied that although he applauded the zeal with which Sherburne had pursued his object, he could not decide so quickly upon purchasing the equipment recommended. Recent dispatches from the theatre of war, he added, gave reason to hope for an early termination of the "harassing and protracted contest."<sup>20</sup> In the meanwhile he promised to consult the military commander in Florida to obtain his opinion of employing balloons in the manner proposed, "for unless the commanding officers there approve the suggestions, the adoption of the measure would be inexpedient," and the Secretary concluded his letter with the pointed comment that "such means can only succeed in willing hands."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Poinsett to Sherburne, Sept. 9, 1840, MS, Misc. File No. 284, ORD, MSS.

<sup>14</sup> Sherburne to Poinsett, November 10, 1840, *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> A brief sketch of Durant's life and work appears in *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1928-1932), V, 540. A scrapbook of newspaper and journal clippings relating to his work is in the New York Public Library. See also E. D. Dime, "America's First Aeronaut," *Air Travel*, January, 1918.

<sup>16</sup> Memorandum of C. F. Durant, Oct. [date omitted], 1840, *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Poinsett's immediate predecessor in the cabinet. He should not be confused with the Union general of identical name.

<sup>18</sup> Sherburne to Poinsett, November 10, 1840, Misc. File No. 284, ORD MSS.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Poinsett to Sherburne, November 18, 1840, *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*



Poinsett thereupon referred the scheme to General W. K. Armistead, then in command in Florida. The latter declared the terrain in which his forces were operating to be unsuited for balloon reconnaissance, and positively refused to use the proposed apparatus.<sup>22</sup> This rejection does not appear to have discouraged Sherburne. The plan was again submitted to the War Department several months later and was this time referred for opinion to General Edmund P. Gaines, an officer who had commanded the forces in Florida in 1835, and was now in charge of the Western Division of the army. Gaines approved the plan and declared that "much good may result from the use of the balloon with night glass and compass . . . not only in Florida, but in the large undulating prairies of the far west, where thousands of Indians . . . are often near the position or route of our troops without being seen by them."<sup>23</sup> But the General qualified his approval of the balloon by admonishing the Department not to continue the error of underrating the strategy of the red men, and stated an opinion that the Indians would soon discover the aerial observatory of their enemies and would exert every effort to destroy it. "But should they fail in this," he concluded, "they would doubtless confuse us by kindling fires on one side of our position and taking their rest in another direction, leaving their fires burning to confuse and deceive us."<sup>24</sup>

The qualified approval of Gaines, however, was of little use. He was not connected with the army in Florida, and wrote his opinion merely in an advisory capacity. The war was finally brought to a close some three months later; and with its conclusion ended the first attempt to apply aeronautics to warfare in the United States.

The second effort to interest the government occurred during the Mexican War, when John Wise, a widely known aeronaut of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, proposed to clear the way for the capture of Vera Cruz by reducing the fortress of San Juan de Ulúa by means of percussion torpedoes dropped from a captive balloon.<sup>25</sup> In July, 1846, the American high command had begun to consider a plan of campaign against Mexico City, in which the taking of Vera Cruz was an essential preliminary objective.<sup>26</sup> The city was guarded from naval attack by the formidable fortified castle of San Juan de Ulúa, an immense, well-armed, structure of masonry built on a coral reef half a mile out from the shore. Because of the presence of reefs and dangerous banks no vessel could approach the fort within a mile and a half from the north; to the east, the reefs also ex-

<sup>22</sup> Poinsett to Sherburne, January 28, 1841, MS. No. S3199, Misc. File No. 284, ORD MSS.

<sup>23</sup> Gaines to Adjutant General Jones, January 25, 1842, MS. Records of the Western Division, U. S. Army, Vol. 140-A [Letters Sent, April, 1841-May, 1846], 189-90 (in ORD, AGO, WD, Washington).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> John Wise, *A System of Aeronautics, Comprehending the Earliest Investigations, and Modern Practice and Art* (Philadelphia, 1850), 257; see also *id.*, *Through the Air; A Narrative of Forty Years' Experience as an Aeronaut* (Philadelphia, 1873), 386.

<sup>26</sup> Justin H. Smith, *The War With Mexico* (New York, 1919), I, 349.

tended as a barrier, and the approach from the south and west was equally dangerous if not impossible, since vessels attacking from such direction would be raked by a cross-fire from the batteries on the fortress itself and from the guns of the shore batteries at Vera Cruz. Only one possible avenue of attack lay open, that from the southeast, and this was covered with heavy guns from that salient of the castle.<sup>27</sup> The fortress has been more than once referred to as a "second Gibraltar,"<sup>28</sup> and Commodore David Conner, who was consulted at the time of the projected American attack, voiced the opinion that if well garrisoned, the fort could resist successfully any naval attack.<sup>29</sup> Richard Pakenham, formerly British minister to Mexico, and familiar with the strategic situation, expressed the belief that a combined naval and land attack on Vera Cruz and Ulúa would be a "very hazardous undertaking."<sup>30</sup> Because of the strength of the objective and the obvious risks in taking it, the American military authorities spent several months—from July to November, 1846—in discussion before an actual decision and plan of campaign was reached. It was ultimately decided to send a land force to invest the city from the inland side, and to employ a fleet on the gulf side for blockading purposes rather than for an attack on the grim castle guarding the city from the sea.<sup>31</sup> In November, 1846, General Winfield Scott was ordered to command the land expeditionary force.<sup>32</sup>

While the discussions were taking place over the question of how to take the city and its protecting fortress, the balloonist Wise came to the conclusion that he could utilize his aeronautic knowledge and ability to good effect and save the government the losses and expense entailed by a direct assault or investment, as well as materially increase his own reputation and prestige. He devised a plan to reduce the castle of Ulúa by attacking it from an angle that could not possibly be reached from the fort's batteries: that is, from the air. In order to test public opinion and bring out any objections to the feasibility of his plan that he might have overlooked before submitting it to the War Department,<sup>33</sup> Wise caused a full account of the scheme to be published in a local Lancaster newspaper, under the title of "Easy Method of Capturing the Castle of Vera Cruz."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See P. Blanchard and A. Dauzato, *San Juan de Ulúa ou relation de l'expédition française au Mexique* (Paris, 1839), 294-96. See also an engineer plan of the work in Smith, *War With Mexico*, II, 21, and a map of the city, fortress, reefs, and surrounding territory in *ibid.*, 24.

<sup>28</sup> Blanchard and Dauzato, *San Juan de Ulúa*, 296; George L. Rives, *The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848* (New York), 1913, II, 378.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 349.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 350.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 350-51, 354.

<sup>32</sup> Secretary of War William L. Marcy to General Scott, November 23, 1846, in *House Document* no. 60, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., 372.

<sup>33</sup> Wise to Marcy, December 10, 1846, MS. Records of the Secretary of War [Letters Received, 1846], MS. No. W315, 1846 (in ORD, AGO, WD, Washington. Hereinafter cited as SW MSS.).

<sup>34</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, October 26, 1846.

Wise began the discussion of his plan with a reiteration of the difficulty of taking the desired objective. "It is acknowledged," he wrote, "to be an extraordinarily well fortified point of defense, almost impregnable to the common mode of warfare, and at best cannot be taken in that way without a great sacrifice of life and ammunition."<sup>35</sup> He then turned to the details of his solution of the problem. The material required consisted of an ordinary balloon of twilled muslin, properly varnished, of one hundred foot diameter, and capable of lifting 20,000 pounds exclusive of its own weight, network, car, and cable. The inflation of the envelope could be accomplished either on land or on a vessel at sea, as the circumstances might require.<sup>36</sup> The car was to be so constructed as to carry some 18,000 pounds of percussion torpedoes and shells, with 2,000 pounds space for ballast and the crew. To control the aerial battery, Wise proposed to maneuver it on a cable five miles long, so as to send it up from a point well out of range of the Mexican batteries and allow it to ascend at least 5,000 feet, thus insuring its safety from musketry and gunfire from the fortress. The position of the balloon in regard to elevation and distance from the anchoring point could be easily controlled by a judicious handling of the ballast. As the ship was lightened by the discharge of bombs and torpedoes, a constant elevation could be maintained by releasing gas.<sup>37</sup> This aerial battery, suspended over the fortress well out of reach of the defenders, was calculated to silence the Mexican batteries and secure capitulation in a very short time. In fact, Wise believed he had arranged for all contingencies, and declared that:

with this aerial warship hanging a mile above the fort, supplied with a thousand percussion bombshells, the castle of Vera Cruz could be taken without the loss of a single life to our army, and at an expense that would be nothing to what it will be to take it by the common mode of attacks.<sup>38</sup>

Wise then concluded his article by expressing his willingness to prepare the balloon for the proposed attack, and offered "most cheerfully" to "undertake its directorship into actual service, at a moment's warning."<sup>39</sup>

The publication of this rather startling or at least novel plan of warfare drew considerable comment from the public. A Philadelphia newspaper observed several months later after the plan had circulated in the press, that "this new method of besieging a fortress has been discussed in every vein of seriousness, wit, or contumely, as the idea seemed feasible, funny or absurd to various minds."<sup>40</sup> In the same article a former governor of Kentucky was quoted as having declared at a public dinner that he thought the plan "an admirable one,

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*; John Wise, *Through the Air*, 386. See also *id.*, *A System of Aeronautics*, 257. Wise appears to have been a realist in matters of military consideration; he considered the sacrifice of ammunition to be of equal importance with the loss of human life.

<sup>36</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, October 26, 1846; Wise, *Through the Air*, 389.

<sup>37</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, October 26, 1846; Wise, *A System of Aeronautics*, 257-58.

<sup>38</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, October 26, 1846; Wise, *Through the Air*, 389.

<sup>39</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, October 26, 1846; Wise, *A System of Aeronautics*, 258.

<sup>40</sup> *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, December 5, 1846.



and the inventor a man of military genius." But the former state executive added that he thought it would be a "very troublesome matter to enlist the volunteers for that service."<sup>41</sup> The same newspaper in an editorial several days after the first publication of Wise's plan in the Lancaster paper referred favorably to the project, and added a jocular allusion to the political aspirations of those successful in war:

As Mr. Wise understands the operation, he is the very man to entrust with this important undertaking. Should he take this redoubtable fortress, he will acquire a renown that will go far to rival the claims of General Taylor to the next Presidency.<sup>42</sup>

Regarding such comments as an indication that the public believed his scheme to be practical, Wise then addressed it to the Secretary of War, explaining that he felt that the plan had been "tested by public opinion" and "analyzed in the popular crucible."<sup>43</sup> As persuasive argument for his project, Wise asserted that "so far as any well-founded objections having appeared against its practicableness, I have some of the best minds in the country to sustain the project . . . As to any objections that may or can be raised against its feasibility, I am ready to rebut by mathematical, philosophical, and practical argument."<sup>44</sup> One point raised in opposition, that of the ex-governor of Kentucky, that it would be difficult to secure volunteers for the balloon crew, Wise conclusively refuted by stating that he would need ten men at the most, and that he had that many volunteered from Lancaster already.<sup>45</sup>

Wise, however, failed to mention who the "best minds in the country" were; and altogether, his tone, though dignified and doubtless sincere, was perhaps a trifle too self-assured to convince the War Department officials. There is no evidence that the letter was ever answered, even with one of the usual perfunctory form letters that became so freely used later on in the Civil War.<sup>46</sup> Vera Cruz was invested and eventually taken by General Scott, and the second plan and attempt to introduce balloons into the American military system failed. It is of interest to note in conclusion that during the investment of this city which Wise wished to capture by aerial tactics, served a young lieutenant of engineers, George B. McClellan, who fifteen years later as commanding general of the Army of the Potomac, cooperated with Wise's chief rival, T. S. C. Lowe, in creating the first American balloon corps in 1861.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, October, 26, 1846.

<sup>43</sup> Wise to Marcy, December 10, 1846 [Letters Received, 1846], MS. No. W315, 1846, SW MSS.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> The "Letters Sent" books of the War Department contain no copy of or reference to any reply sent to Wise. The "Letters Received" books in which Wise's letter is calendared bears no reference of disposition, this fact indicating that the letter was not sent to some bureau or department for consideration and answer.

# THE KNIFE AND CLUB IN TRENCH WARFARE, 1914-1918

*By Frederick P. Todd*

THE study of weapons, whether for pastime or utility, should be a study of weapons in the hands of men. Even the most technical treatment cannot escape this requirement, for no amount of artistry or mechanical perfection can hide a weapon's fundamental objectivity. One of the most significant results of such a functional study is the realization that weapons tend to become closely integrated with the character of their times and of their makers. The form and rugged precision of the Kentucky rifle calls instantly to mind the American frontiersman which it so closely resembles—the two can hardly be disassociated. Again, one can not study the Roman legionary without appreciating the fact that his broadsword was more than his weapon; it was the soul of his tactics and the symbol of his sturdy psychology.

The knife and the club are ancient but very common weapons, infinite in their form and utility. The five years of the World War saw a wide revival in their employment and witnessed the reapplication of their symbolism to present day military and social history. Both of these arms, but in particular the knife, became the emblem of a distinct cult of individual combat and physical prowess which has continued until today and which forms a definite part of the ideology of the fascist states. The origin of this symbolism and its subsequent development can be traced through the following paragraphs.

The knife is as old as man. Its comparative simplicity, whether designed for cutting or thrusting, has made it in civil life the most democratic of weapons. The concealment made possible by its size and its general utility have been other elements which have favored a widespread adoption. In some parts of the World its use is traditional. Among many of the Slavic and Latin races, among the less civilized tribes of Africa, Asia and elsewhere a knife forms an indispensable part of the national costume. In organized warfare, however, where concealment is of small advantage and range is all desirable it has never been popular. Men have added knives to the end of poles and muskets but in the mass fighting prior to 1914 the weapon alone found little favor. The subsequent increase in the range and destructiveness of modern firearms suddenly altered this situation. Individual initiative in combat became of first-rate importance and everywhere there was an increasing reliance placed on small groups to compensate for the wider and wider deployment required in battle. Missile attacks at great range, furthermore, were rarely decisive and there was always the need of providing a tangible agency from which a bewildered enemy could run. Actual physical shock effect—even hand-to-hand fighting—was far more frequent during the World War than it had been for centuries past.

The development of the trench knife and, for a short while, the trench club was a direct outcome of this demand for individual combat. The most obvious weapons for this work were, of course, the bayonet and the grenade. The average

man could readily be trained in their simple techniques and with proper inspiration could put them to effective use. No particular psychological transformation was necessary since the throwing range of the grenade and the "fencing" permitted by the length of the rifle were just enough to retain an element of impersonality in combat—just sufficient to avoid the soldier's natural repugnancy for too sheer brutality.

It was soon discovered, however, that in many conditions encountered in trench warfare the rifle and bayonet made a most unwieldy weapon. Then in 1915 the trench raid was instituted, reputedly by the Canadians.<sup>1</sup> During the course of the War these raids fell into two classes. In the period up to about November, 1916, the "stealth" raid was highly successful. Its technique was simple but its personnel requirements most difficult since it called for a high degree of individual bravery. It was normally conducted at night with small parties and without artillery or mortar preparation. Everything depended on surprise.<sup>2</sup> For this type of raid the trench hand weapon originally was devised. The rifle was far too cumbersome to carry when one had to crawl on his stomach any distance and the ordinary bayonet was found to be just the wrong length for effective use in the hand. The pistol was possible, particularly as a club, but a great drawback lay in the soldier's tendency to fire it prematurely at the thousand and one imaginary figures met with in the course of a night raid. The grenade continued a favorite but with the same limitations as the pistol coupled with the fact that in the confusion of hand-to-hand combat its detonation was often as injurious to friend as to foe.

During the fall of 1916, as methods of defense against Allied stealth raids were perfected, more and more of them ended in failure. Although the Germans continued the practice until as late as 1917 the stealth raid was gradually abandoned in favor of a new technique which may be called the "raid-in-force." In this about 130 carefully trained men were used in a daytime attack over a wide front with strong artillery support and the assistance of all the infantry weapons.<sup>3</sup> Personal bravery and skill were thereby rendered of less importance than collective efficiency induced by special training for the offense. The weapons of individual combat then became part of a new kind of tactics.

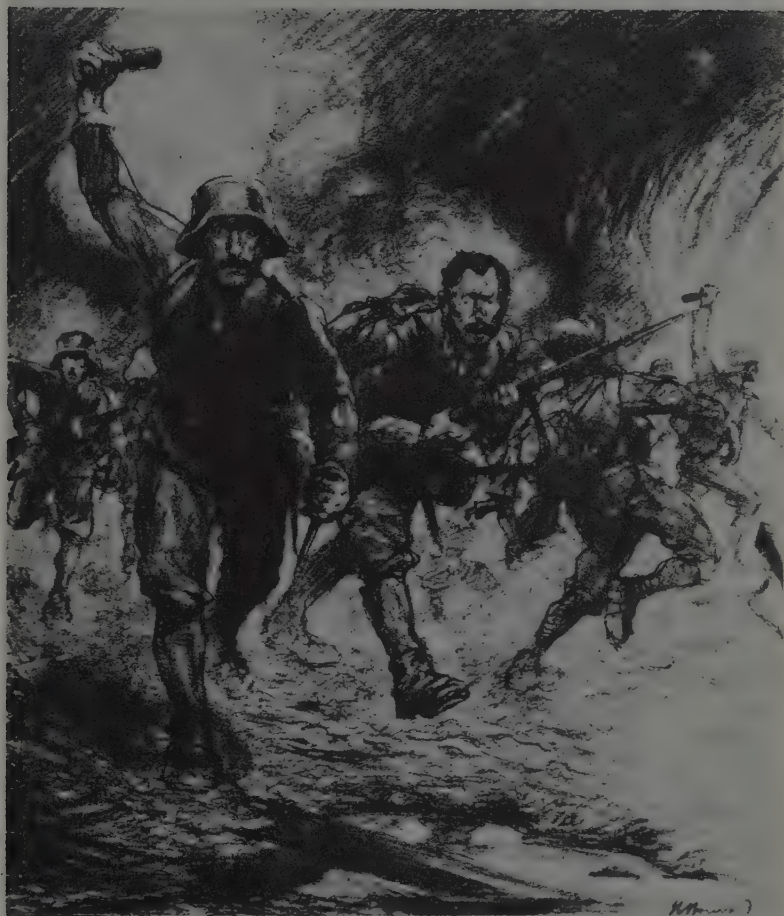
The raid-in-force had been a development made possible by the organization, first in the German army and later in others, of special "assault" or "storm" units, designed purely for shock effect. These battalions represented the élite of the infantry and their superior hardihood, training and courage were recognized by distinctions in dress and equipment. They were the spearhead of every attack. In the long run the separation of such a leaven of first-class men from the bulk

<sup>1</sup> Captain F. Haws Elliott, *Trench Fighting* (Boston, 1917), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Major Donald M. McRae, *Offensive Fighting* (Phila., 1918), pp. 31-58. For typical trench warfare operations in France see also J. E. Edmonds et al., *Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1916* (London, 1933), I.

<sup>3</sup> McRae, *op. cit.*





AUSTRIAN ASSAULT

Drawing by Hugo Bouvard in Otto Konig, *Heimat in Not* (Innsbruck, 1918), p. 65

of the infantry proved to have been unwise, but for some time they amply justified their existence and laid the foundation for the contemporary doctrine of storm troops as it exists among the fascist countries of Europe.

At the outbreak of the World War, and in fact for some decades previous, none of the regular infantry of the civilized world was equipped with a shock weapon designed primarily for use in the hand.<sup>4</sup> It is true that the Spanish foot soldier carried a form of machete, that Highland officers of the British army carried a dirk in full dress, and there are other examples, but not one of these arms was designed for fighting. In a sense the same can be said of the *kinzhal*, a native dagger of unusual grace and workmanship worn by Cossacks of the Russian army. Although a true weapon it was intended for strictly personal use and figured rarely in combat during the War. For the first evidence of the knife as a real implement of offense one has to turn to the colonial troops which formed the "barbaric fringe" of the larger armies of 1914.

Both the British and the French introduced colored colonials to the Western Front and most of these native soldiers were familiar with the science of knife fighting. Yet because of the barbarisms which were alleged to have resulted from this type of combat and its questionable legality in the eyes of international law, the Allies appear to have been unusually careful in avoiding reference thereto. At the same time the German propagandists exploited this use of colored troops and the resulting outrages, with the consequence that it is difficult to form an idea of the extent and effectiveness of this kind of warfare.<sup>5</sup> In two instances we can be reasonably certain that native knives were regularly carried by such organizations; yet in both there is even today such a widespread opinion that the weapon was constantly and ferociously employed together with such a dearth of substantial evidence that one is tempted to consider the entire business as purely legendary.

Gurkha and Garhwal regiments of the Indian Army were, in 1914, equipped with their native knife called the *kukri* and with this they were traditionally skillful fighters. The military history of India affords numerous incidents of its deadly use. It is undeniably a wicked looking affair, long and curved, with a keen cutting edge and a heavy back. The Gurkha used the *kukri* for every purpose from manslaughter to peeling potatoes and carried it in a specially designed sheath attached to the rear of the waist belt with the result that it rested a little to the right of the small of his back.<sup>6</sup>

Information on the use of the *kukri* is difficult to obtain. There were wild rumors of swift and deadly knife attacks even before the Gurkhas reached the

<sup>4</sup> U. S. War Dept., Office of the Chief of Staff, *Comparative Studies of the Field Equipment of the Foot Soldier* (Wash., 1906), *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Great Britain, War Office [Peter C. Mitchell], *Report on the Propaganda Library* [in the Intelligence Division] (London, 1917), 39. At first the German General Staff viewed the use of colored troops with indifference, later they were loud in protest.

<sup>6</sup> Lt. Col. J. W. B. Merewether and Sir Frederick Smith, *The Indian Corps in France* (London, 1917), index.



#### THE COLONIAL KNIFE

On the left, a Senegalese in the attack as pictured by a German; painting by Otto Flechtner in *Deutschlands Gegner in Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1925), page 41. On the right, a Gurkha some years before the War; reproduced by courtesy of *The Illustrated London News*, March 7, 1908.





Front. In some of the earlier contemporary histories of the War there are apparently substantiated stories of such fighting.<sup>7</sup> Yet histories of the Indian Corps are strangely silent on this point or at best tend to minimize the effectiveness of the weapon.<sup>8</sup> Operations orders of the Gurkha and Garhwal regiments never speak of the *kukri* except when it is to be used for brush cutting.<sup>9</sup> The Indian Corps was never at home in Flanders and certainly the Gurkha, born among the hills, felt lost in the dreary flatness of the British front. By the end of 1915 the bulk of the Corps had been transferred to other lands and the little brown skinned soldier with the long knife became largely a legend. It seems safe only to say that the *kukri* was normally carried in the assault but rarely withdrawn from the scabbard, that it saw some service during night trench raids, but that its real tactical employment was never encouraged by the British nor executed by the Gurkhas.

In the story of the French Senegalese units one is confronted with the same conspiracy of silence and mass of legend. These *tirailleurs* from West Africa also had their difficulties with the cold weather and the strange warfare of France, but there can be little doubt that they were considered of military importance.<sup>10</sup> To the 30,742 French Negro troops under arms in August 1914, over 200,000 additional were enlisted during the War, an increase from thirty-five battalions of various types to over ninety-four in 1918. There were forty-four battalions in France alone as the conflict closed.<sup>11</sup> Obviously the Senegalese was a success as a soldier, but this success is not easy to account for. His fighting qualities have been variously appraised, perhaps most fairly by a French official who, in 1921, stated that the *tirailleur* "presents the best example of those qualities necessary in the foot soldier: bravery, devotion, discipline. On the other hand, he has little aptitude for the specialist's work of the infantry, as a machine gunner, a signaller, etc. He appears moreover to be incapable of assuming the complex duties of a non-commissioned officer in modern war."<sup>12</sup> The quality "bravery" appears to be a common denominator of all such appraisals and herein may lie the answer. This is probably not the correct word, it is easy to imagine that "ferocity" might be a better.

If this is the case then the silence of the French and the voluble protests of the Germans can be understood.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore it would lead one to admit the prob-

<sup>7</sup> *The Times History of the War*, II (1915), 347-52.

<sup>8</sup> Sir James Willcocks, *With the Indians in France* (London, 1920), *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> David H. Drake-Brockman, *With the Royal Garhwal Rifles in the Great War* (London? 1934?), 141.

<sup>10</sup> Shelby C. Davis, *Reservoirs of Men* (Chambery, France, 1934), 156-62.

<sup>11</sup> France, Ministère de la Guerre, *Histoire militaire de l'Afrique Occidentale Française* (Paris, 1931), 807, 826.

<sup>12</sup> Davis, *op. cit.*, 178.

<sup>13</sup> The bibliography of the Senegalese in the World War is surprisingly limited and foreign writers have found the French Government loath to furnish any facts in this field. "Bibliography of Senegalese and colonial troops in the World War" (Typewritten

ability of many of the accounts of the Senegalese brought back by those men of the A. E. F. who fought next to them at Soissons, on the Champagne front, and elsewhere. That of Major John W. Thomason, Jr., of the Marine Corps, is typical:

These wild black Mohammedans from West Africa were enjoying themselves. Killing, which is at best an acquired taste with the civilized races, was only too palpably their mission in life. Their eyes rolled, and their splendid white teeth flashed in their heads, but here all resemblance to a happy Southern darky stopped. They were deadly. Each platoon swept its front like a hunting-pack, moving swiftly and surely together. The lieutenant felt a thrill of professional admiration as he went with them.

The hidden guns that fired on them were located with uncanny skill; they worked their automatic rifles forward on each flank until the doomed emplacement was under a scissors fire; then they took up the matter with the bayonet, and slew with lion-like leaps and lunges and a shrill barbaric yapping. They took no prisoners. It was plain that they did not rely on rifle fire or understand the powers of that arm—to them a rifle was merely something to stick a bayonet on—but with the bayonet they were terrible, and the skill of their rifle grenadiers and automatic-rifle men always carried them to close quarters without too great loss.

They carried also a broad-blade knife, razor-sharp, which disembowelled a man at a stroke. The slim bayonet of the French breaks off short when the weight of a body pulls down and sidewise on it; and then the knives come out. With reason the Boche feared them worse than anything living, and the lieutenant saw in those woods unwounded fighting Germans who flung down their rifles when the Senegalese rushed, and covered their faces, and stood screaming against the death they could not look upon. And—in a lull, a long, grinning sergeant, with a cruel aquiline face, approached him and offered a brace of human ears, nicely fresh, strung upon a thong. "*B'jour, American! Voild! Beaucoup souvenir ici—bon! Désirez-vous? Bon!*"<sup>14</sup>

The term "Senegalese" is in reality a misnomer for these colonials were recruited from the greater part of French West and French Equatorial Africa. The bulk of the tribes inhabiting this vast area use a distinctive style of knife and use it constantly in war and in peace. In its most characteristic form it possessed a wide, double-edged blade about a foot in length, slit and grooved for the flow of blood. It was of native fabrication, frequently adorned with elaborate ornamentation.<sup>15</sup> This was the weapon which the *tirailleur* brought to France.

No provision was made for the knife in the standard equipment since it was not authorized by regulation. The men carried it stuck into their trousers belt underneath the tunic.<sup>16</sup> The French classed the weapon under the general term "*coutelas*" and admitted its utility for trench work in mopping up after an attack.<sup>17</sup> The *tirailleur* employed the common African knife technique, an underhand gouging stroke, aimed low into the abdomen. Needless to say the resulting wound was almost always instantly fatal. By repute he carried the weapon in his

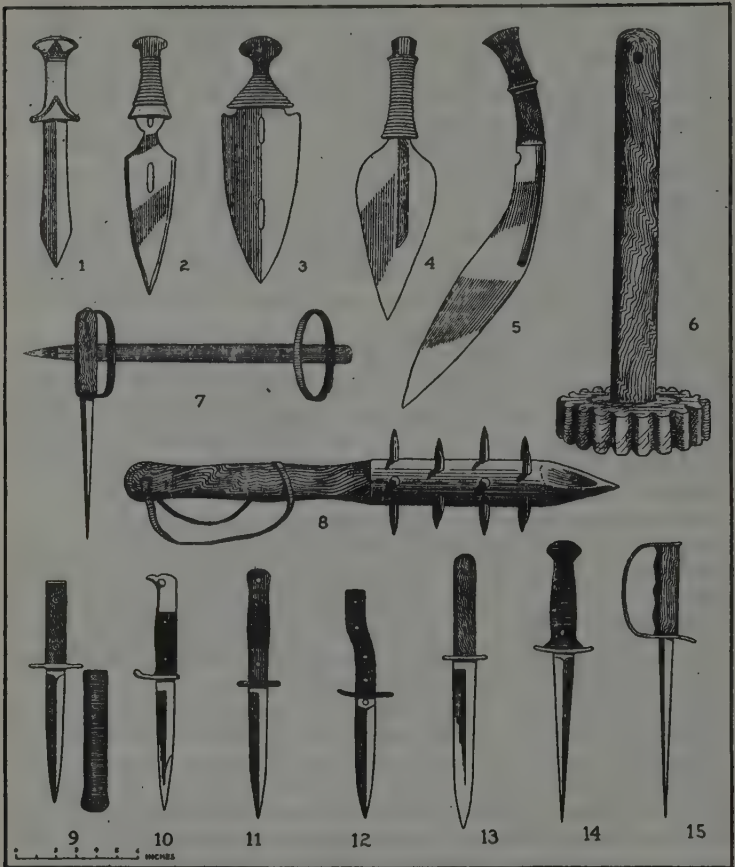
MS, dated November 10, 1932, in Army War College Library). The knife is rarely mentioned in such French histories or personal narratives as exist.

<sup>14</sup> *Fix Bayonets!* (N. Y., 1926), 105-106. See also a somewhat similar description in Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu* (English translation titled *Under Fire*, New York, 1917), 44-46.

<sup>15</sup> Georg Schweinfurth, *Artes Africanæ* (Leipzig, London, 1875), tab. xii; E. Torday and T. A. Joyce, *Notes Ethnographiques sur des Populations habitant les bassins kassai et du kwango oriental* (Brussels, 1922), *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> They were also equipped with a regulation brush knife, carried on the pack.

<sup>17</sup> General Peltier, "Contribution à l'étude de l'armement des troupes aux Colonies," *Revue des Troupes coloniales*, 15e an. (1921), 398.



1-4. Typical native knives of central and western Africa. 5. Indian *kukri*. 6. Early hand-made British trench club. 7. Early type of "knuckle-duster" knife, British. 8. German trench club. 9. Italian *arditi* knife. 10. German officer's knife. 11-12. Field fabricated trench knives, German. 13. Austrian trench knife, probably constructed in the field. 14. Belgian commercial pattern knife. 15. French commercial pattern knife. Specimens 5-8 and 10-14 are from the Jarrett Museum of World War History Moorestown, N. J.; specimens 1-4 and 9 from the National Museum, Washington, D. C.



teeth during the assault. Doubtless this was one of the few handy positions since the knife was usually too broad to be stuck into the top of the rolled puttees and certainly the man's teeth were equal to the strain, yet the obvious dangers incident to carrying a razor-edged, double-bladed implement in the mouth render the idea a little absurd.

Unquestionably the colonial's use of the knife opened the minds of the European to its possibilities in the stealth raid. At first, however, they were prompted to experiment with an more forthright weapon. Early in the War the Germans began to produce a bludgeon-like instrument reminiscent of the "morning star" of medieval times. It was a crudely made affair with a handle which appears in many cases to have been originally fashioned for either the "stick type" hand grenade or the entrenching shovel. The fore end consisted of a heavy piece of pipe, tapped into which were small spikes sharpened from round steel stock, each about an inch and one half in length. The weapon must have been cumbersome to carry but its grim spikes and solid grip doubtless improved the courage of many a storm soldier about to crawl forward into the night.

Similar trench clubs were used in the Austrian army, probably to a greater extent than in the German, and incidentally furnished excellent copy for the Allied propagandist. No examples of these exhibit evidence of planned arsenal manufacture, about each of them is that individuality which bespeaks the field forge.<sup>18</sup> The German infantryman soon discovered that if his entrenching shovel was sharpened along one side and used as a cleaver it was a far more efficient weapon. This discovery together with the development of the trench knife soon placed the club in the discard.

The German trench knife is a direct descendant of the bayonet. The Mauser rifle of the model of 1898, the standard weapon of the German army, was fitted during the emergencies of the World War with at least thirty types of bayonets. The original bayonet and the one used perhaps by the bulk of the infantry had an unusually long blade of twenty-one inches. There were, however, several shorter models which came into use early in the War with blades of from ten to twelve inches, models fabricated in Germany prior to the War for various South American countries.<sup>19</sup> As the need developed for trench knives these short bayonets as well as others, broken in combat, were pressed into service and altered to suit the individual taste. Many were ground down until the blade was barely six inches long. At first this work was performed in the field, yet it is evident from examples found that later in the War such knives were being commercially fabricated.

The average German is not by tradition a knife fighter and it is therefore somewhat surprising that this weapon attained such an unusual degree of symbolism in that army. Actually this was due more to a problem in style than anything else. When the sword was eliminated by the exigencies of modern warfare as the

<sup>18</sup> Examples in the Jarrett Museum of World War History, Moorestown, N. J.

<sup>19</sup> J. E. Coombes and J. L. Aney, *The German Mauser Rifle, Model of 1898* (N. Y., 1921), *passim*.

traditional officers' sidearm new symbols of rank had to be found. While British and French commissioned ranks chose the cane or riding crop the Teuton, adopting a naval vogue, selected the dagger as the closest replica of his former sword as well as a weapon of definite utility. By the latter part of 1916 all officers of *Portepée* rank had been authorized to wear this sidearm in field uniform.<sup>20</sup> As first carried it was simply the short bayonet, but later in the War more decorative models appeared with blades of highly tempered steel and handles of stag horn. The knife had regained caste; in Germany it is still an official sidearm of the officer.

The British soldier in a trench "scrum" felt more at home with his fists or with a club than with the knife. As one officer explained, there was something so definitely un-English about stabbing that four years of trench warfare never quite overcame the aversion.<sup>21</sup> While his German opponent was experimenting with spiked bludgeons he had devised a strange weapon which he called, with characteristic whimsy, his "persuader." In its most common form it consisted of a stout wooden stick to the end of which was attached an automobile cogwheel, simpler persuaders were produced from iron pipe, hammers, or whatever else came to hand.

As the technique of the stealth raid became more elaborate, less cumbersome weapons were sought. The frequent forced employment of the bayonet as a hand weapon had gradually convinced the British soldier of the possibilities of the knife and the impracticability of the bayonet for close combat. Men began to experiment with implements of all sorts. A Captain Fallon invented what he called an "arm-let bayonet" whose performance in action so convinced him of its value that he went to some trouble to persuade the Ministry of Munitions to adopt it officially. The suggestion was refused but Fallon had it privately manufactured and issued for training.<sup>22</sup> It was in reality two knives, one held as usual by the clenched fist and a second which lay parallel to the arm and projected beyond the hand, attached to the handle of the first. A metal loop held the rear of the second blade tight to the forearm.<sup>23</sup>

Other patterns appeared, many of them of commercial fabrication and most of doubtful utility. One type, however, adopted a principal familiar to every English and American rowdy, that of attaching "brass knuckles" to the knife. Fallon's invention and others already had capitalized on the Briton's instinctive use of his fists but this new weapon gave it full play for both jaw smashing and stabbing. It rapidly became the most popular type and was known throughout the British

<sup>20</sup> *Die Uniformen der Deutschen Armee* (Leipzig, 1916), *passim*; the new field kits shown in this reference had been authorized for Prussia by general order, War Ministry, no. 735, September 25, 1915 [Prussia] Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungsblatt* (Berlin, 1915), 420-22, and subsequently for the other states.

<sup>21</sup> Colonel the Rt. Hon. Sir John Macdonald, "The Knife in Trench Warfare," *Jour. Royal Service Instit.*, LXII (1917), 64-68.

<sup>22</sup> Captain David Fallon, *The Big Fight* (N. Y., 1918), *passim*.

<sup>23</sup> A sample of this knife may be seen at the Imperial War Museum, London.

army as the "knuckle duster." One such knife was included in the A. E. F. tests of May, 1918. It is described as having a one-edged blade, five inches long, with brass knuckles and handle combined. Its finger holes permitted it to be retained in the hand through any struggle or while crawling over bad ground. Other knives could be gotten into action with greater rapidity, but this was its sole defect and with some modifications it was adopted by our own army in 1918.<sup>24</sup>

Although the "knuckle duster" represented almost the ultimate in trench shock weapons it was never adopted officially by the British, indeed, no pattern of knife ever was. In spite of its practical possibilities, the constant use of commercial types, and the pleading of officers at the Front,<sup>25</sup> the Trench Warfare Department never saw its way clear to add further complications to the ordnance program by the manufacture of any instrument whose sole utility lay with such an "unofficial" method of warfare. No mention is made of the knife in contemporary British regulations, the Mills grenade was believed all sufficient for close quarters.<sup>26</sup> With the advent of the raid-in-force the trench knife declined in importance and the day of the specially equipped individual raider came gradually to an end.

There is no evidence to point to the fact that either the French or Belgian armies officially adopted the trench knife. Its development was commercial and doubtless followed closely that of the British weapon. In its most common form the French knife consisted of a blade of about four or five inches in length; narrow and tapering to a point in the manner of a stiletto and an ordinary sword grip. This blade was usually triangular in shape and sometimes as thick as an inch and a quarter at the base. The first American knife, that of the Model 1917, was patterned after a French commercial type.<sup>27</sup>

It was in the Italian army that the knife achieved the symbolism closest to that which it holds today, bearing a strong relationship to shock tactics. Early in the course of the War the Italians had experimented with assault units, bizarre groups bearing such titles as the "Company of Explorers of Death." By early 1917 these units had proved that they could be of considerable value in the individualistic mountain warfare of the Italian Alps. They were given the name *arditi* (The Daring) and a special insignia to wear of a black flaming bomb. The companies became proficient in the use of the grenade, experimented with heavy armor and made themselves generally conspicuous. Their real test came after the disaster at Caporetto when, in the clammy October rains of 1917, the Italian divisions funneled backward in a panic of mud with a loss of some 800,000 men.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> "Report of tests made in May, 1918, at the Army School in France of trench knives" (mimeographed report dated January 1, 1919, Ordnance Library).

<sup>25</sup> Macdonald, *loc. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Great Britain, War Office, *Notes on Infantry Attacks and Raids as Organized in the Present War* (Republished by War Dept., Wash., 1917); most authors of unofficial manuals also ignore the knife. McRae, formerly of the Canadian infantry, in a long discussion recommends revolvers and grenades alone for night work, no equipment, no helmets. *Offensive Fighting*, 59-85.

<sup>27</sup> "Report of tests."

<sup>28</sup> "Riparti di assalto," *Enciclopedia Italiana*, IV, 981.



It was imperative that Italy rebuild her shattered morale. To accomplish this, to recapture the spirit of attack, she turned to the *arditi*. Considerably expanding their organization she opened their ranks to all the daredevils of the army and then turned to that great field from which desperate, hardened men can always be found, the prisons. These new units were termed officially *riparti di assalto* but other titles such as "Company of Death" and "The Murderers" were encouraged by their members. In them were all the dash and dramatic grimness which appealed to the Latin temperament. They were designed for purely offensive tactics, they were tough and anxious to prove it.<sup>29</sup>

The normal *arditi* formation was a 300 man company, attached to a corps or division as special troops. Each company usually comprised three or four regular assault platoons together with a heavy machine gun section of two Fiat guns, a "pistol machine gun" section, a mortar section, and a section equipped with portable flame-throwers. The men were trained exclusively in offensive tactics and hand-to-hand fighting. Since their principal weapons were the dagger and the grenade, particular stress was laid on the training of these weapons (notwithstanding the common belief that such knowledge is instinctive with the Italian). Rifles were rarely carried and then only by selected men.<sup>30</sup>

The *arditi* certainly dressed the part. Their baggy uniforms were of the regulation green-gray but everything else they wore was black: shirt, tie, fez, puttees, and even the insignia. To add to this picture many of the men carried a death's head sewn on the shirt front. They traveled light and knapsacks were dispensed with in favor of a small haversack and blanket roll. They usually attacked in small groups in the hour before the dawn. Creeping over silently, grenade in hand, a dagger in the teeth, and the skull and cross bones staring from the front of the black shirts, they would fall upon the drowsy Austrian sentinels. In a whirlwind action they would blow out the front lines and start their Fiats spraying the rear area. The regular infantry, hastily awakened, would be forced to move forward and take over. The *arditi* then would pull out, get in their trucks and move off leaving a hitherto quiet sector to be held against a now bitter and determined enemy.<sup>31</sup>

The Italian dagger was called the *puniale*. It was a short weapon with a blade of about seven inches in length, inexpensive and of arsenal manufacture. The most common type had a simple wooden handle and what almost amounts to a stiletto blade.<sup>32</sup>

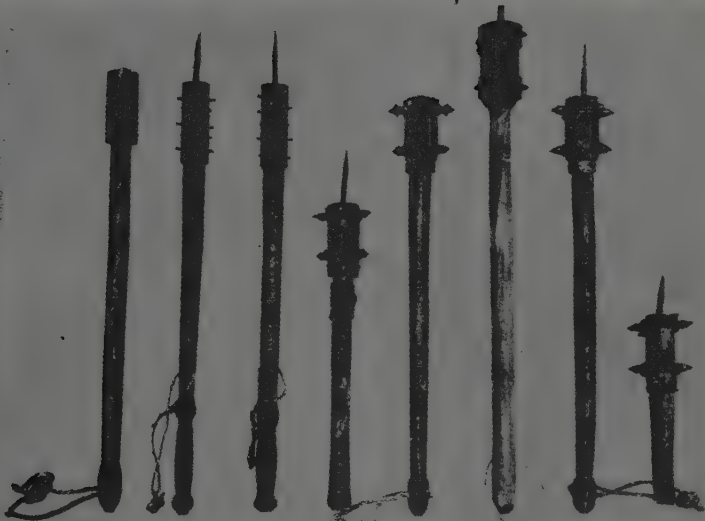
At the close of the War the assault units were disbanded but their black shirts, their battle song "Giovinezza", and their aggressive spirit lives on in the Fascist militia of today. The tradition of the knife has become part of the symbolism of modern Italy.

<sup>29</sup> Padre Reginaldo Giuliani, *Gli arditi* (Milan, 1934), *passim*.

<sup>30</sup> *Enci. Ital.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> Giuliani, *op. cit.*, and personal reminiscences of living officers.

<sup>32</sup> Example in The National Museum, Washington, D. C.



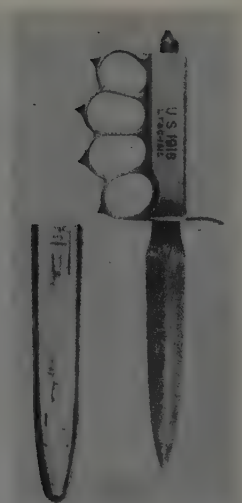
*Photographs Signal Corps*

# AUSTRIAN TRENCH CLUBS

Photographs used by the Allies for propaganda purposes.



1917 Model of Trench Knife and  
Scabbard



Mark I Trench Knife With Flat  
Blade, Designed by A. E. F.



*Photographs: Signal Corps*

The Trench Knife as Worn in the A. E. F.

**THE UNITED STATES ARMY TRENCH KNIFE**  
(Upper photographs from *America's Munitions*)

When the United States entered the War the trench knife was already a fixture, its use tacitly approved by all combatants. During the summer of 1917 the Government consulted various manufacturers on the subject of making such a weapon, giving them a general idea of what was required. A design submitted by Henry Disston & Sons, of Philadelphia, based apparently on a French commercial model, was selected by the Ordnance Department and manufacture was commenced. This knife, known as the Model 1917, was produced in two slightly varying forms and sent to the A. E. F. in large quantities.<sup>33</sup> It was an inexpensive weapon with a strong, triangular blade about ten inches long, tapering to a sharp point. The grip was made of wood and there was a metal guard with "knuckles" on the outer side.<sup>34</sup> It was planned to issue forty trench knives to each infantry rifle company.<sup>35</sup> Although it is doubtful if this issue was very generally accomplished it is certain that many of these implements saw service in action.

In May 1918 a series of tests were conducted at the Army Schools, A. E. F., to determine the relative merits of the trench knives then in common use. Beside our own Model 1917 there was tested a French commercial pattern, an English "knuckle duster", and an experimental affair called the Hughes knife. The general characteristics of the first three have been mentioned above; the Hughes invention proved of no value. The tests demonstrated that our Model 1917, while sturdy, was too cumbersome, its blade too long, and that the lack of a cutting edge was a serious deficiency. All of this led to the adoption of the second American type known as the Model 1918, Mark I.<sup>36</sup>

This new weapon had a blade of six and seven-eighths inches with a four inch handle core. The blade was made of tempered steel, two-edged, ground sharp and pointed. The handle was made of one piece of bronze and included the pommel, handgrip, "knuckles", and the guard. The scabbard was constructed of one piece of flanged steel and had on its outside two hooks to permit its attachment to the inside of the cartridge belt where it was carried in an upright position.<sup>37</sup> Orders were placed for 1,232,780 of these knives with deliveries to begin in December 1918. The orders were reduced to 119,424 when peace required the cancellation of these contracts.<sup>38</sup>

The Model 1918 knife is a regulation weapon in the United States Army today. It may be considered superior to any of its class, a far cry from the curved *kukri* of the Gurkha. Although it can be found nowadays only in the cosmoline of some Ordnance warehouse, its European prototype is widely apparent. It hangs on the belts of a myriad politico-military organizations as a reminder of the fundamental importance of the individual fighter under the concept of the nation at arms.

<sup>33</sup> U. S., War Dept., Asst. Sect. of War, *America's Munitions* [Report of Benedict Crowell] (Wash., 1919), 228.

<sup>34</sup> "Report of tests."

<sup>35</sup> U. S., War Dept., Ordnance Equipment Tables, No. 7 (April 1, 1918).

<sup>36</sup> "Report of tests."

<sup>37</sup> U. S., War Dept., Training Regulations 1300-E (May 18, 1927), pp. 15-16.

<sup>38</sup> U. S., War Dept., *America's Munitions*, 228.



# PROFESSIONAL NEWS

In the *Infantry Journal's* column of anonymous idealism called "Cerebrations" there appeared, in the May-June issue, a note entitled "Why Not Soon?" After twenty years, asks "Historicus," why is the official history of our participation in the World War not yet published? The contributor particularly poses the question of the mystery surrounding the changes made in the American high command, but he also emphasizes the interest felt in the publication of the general history of the war from the point of view of American operations. Regardless of how sensational the answers to the first inquiry might be, the note is timely and pertinent. A similar statement is the article of Colonel Ned B. Rehkopf in *The Field Artillery Journal* for April, which stresses a need for honest and living biographies of military leaders, biographies which would utilize the technical knowledge of the military as well as the research of the historian.

\* \* \*

Somewhat belatedly the editors wish to mention the article on gorgets which appeared in *The Bulletin of The Fort Ticonderoga Museum* for September, 1937. While the text is not as full as that of the series of articles on the same subject by Captain H. Oakes Jones in *The Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research* (1921-22), the illustrations are clearer and in addition cover the American field.

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In its *Bulletin* for May, 1938, the New York Public Library announced the accession of a collection of manuscripts and books relating to military costume and insignia, left to the Library in the will of the late Brigadier General DeWitt Clinton Falls. To the American antiquarian General Falls was known as an ardent collector of items in this field and was recognized as the outstanding authority on the dress of our militia and National Guard units. The numerous scrapbooks which comprise the most useful part of the collection contain mostly drawings by General Falls himself. Since he collected largely for his own information searchers in his notes will encounter a scarcity of detail, but nevertheless it will be many years before his work on American militia costume will

be surpassed. Some of the more colorful and interesting prints were placed on exhibit during the summer together with parts of the Vinkhuizen Collection and other examples of military uniform illustration.

\* \* \*

Another issue of the *Bulletin*, that of April, contains two items of interest to military historians. Mr. W. J. Burke's bibliography, "The Literature of Slang," in the section covering "war slang," lists about sixty titles in the Library relating to the jargon of the soldier. The guide to reference collections, which has also been running serially, includes in this issue a brief summary of the collection on "Military Art."

\* \* \*

The Shiloh National Military Park received a few months ago from the Museum Division of the Park Service at Washington a collection of forty-four water color pictures and display maps for the enrichment of the museum in the park headquarters building at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee. Nearly all of the pictures represent, with spirit and fidelity, historic scenes and incidents of the campaign and battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, and are based upon contemporary photographs, sketches, or other authoritative materials. A few have to do with the earlier history of the region and with the prehistoric era of the Indians and the mound builders, for on the battlefield of Shiloh are several remarkable and well-preserved mounds. The display maps represent, simply but with graphic vividness, the principal maneuvers of the Federal and Confederate armies on the field of Shiloh.

The majority of the paintings were made by Messrs. Lee R. Warthen, Harry C. Wood, Wilfred S. Bronson, and Herman Van Cott, artists of the Museum Division, in collaboration with Robert S. Starrett and Alden B. Stevens, museum curators, and William S. Luckett, Junior Park Historian at Shiloh. Mr. Luckett suggested many of the subjects, and also prepared the labels and texts, which accompany and most satisfactorily explain the maps and pictures.

It is the intention of the National Park Service eventually to have such galleries of paintings, referring chiefly to the local scene, in the museum of each national military or historical park.

\* \* \*

Oliver Lyman Spaulding, Colonel U. S. A., and a trustee of the Foundation, received the degree of doctor of laws, *honoris causa*, from the University of Michigan at the June commencement. The citation for the degree referred to Colonel Spaulding's publications which include *Notes on Field Artillery*, *The Pen and Sword in Greece and Rome*, and *The United States Army in Peace and War*. The last two works were reviewed in recent issues of the JOURNAL.

\* \* \*

The Foundation is planning to hold sessions on military history at the annual

meetings of the American Historical Association at Chicago and the Association's Pacific Coast Branch at Stanford University on or about December 28 and 29 of this year. Arrangements for the former meetings are being made by Dr. Courtney R. Hall of Adelphi College, Garden City, New York, and for the latter by J. Marius Scammell of the Historical Records Survey, 525 Oakland Avenue, Oakland, California.

The program for the Chicago session will include papers by Dr. Nelson Vance Russell and Dr. Amandus Johnson on topics related to the military history of the Old Northwest, 1760-1796. Papers anticipated for the California session include one on the resources of the Hoover War Library and others on the military history of California. It is hoped that Professor Ralph H. Lutz will be able to preside over this meeting. All members of the Foundation are cordially invited to attend these sessions. Full details will be furnished within the near future.

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Dr. Alfred Hasbrouck is a colonel, retired, of the U. S. Army, and Ph. D. of Columbia University. He is well known for his writings in Florida and Hispanic American history. During winter months he is one of the literary colony at Rollins College.

F. Stansbury Haydon, an instructor in history at Johns Hopkins University and a first lieutenant of Field Artillery, Maryland National Guard, is at present engaged in research in the history of aeronautics in the American Civil War.

Howard H. Peckman is Curator of Manuscripts at the William L. Clements Library at Ann Arbor.

Lt. Col. J. Marius Scammell is a Field Supervisor for the Historical Records Survey. He has been connected with military affairs since his enlistment in 1908 in the 5th California Infantry, has been associated with history faculties at the University of California and the Naval War College, and has studied military history at Oxford. From 1934 to 1935 he was Secretary of the Foundation.

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### RECENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

*This survey of recent periodical literature, which will hereafter form a regular department of the JOURNAL, is not intended to be comprehensive but to include such works which the editors consider to be of unique interest. The present list covers the period from January to July, 1938, and is drawn from American and British publications easily obtainable.*

Lt. Col. A. C. M. Azoy, "Happy New Year, 1777," in *The Coast Artillery Journal*, May-June 1938 (LXXXI, 170-78). The story of the Battle of Princeton, told impartially in a readable manner.

E. Douglas Branch, "Henry Bouquet, Professional Soldier," in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, January, 1938 (LXII, 41-51). Account of the military experience of an officer whom the author considers "the most brilliant leader of light infantry that the French and Indian War produced."

A. H. Burne, "Cornwallis at Yorktown," in *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Summer, 1938 (XVII, 71-76). Critique of the usual interpretation of Cornwallis' failure at Yorktown, and a rehabilitation of the British general.

Major John H. Burns, "What About Military History?" in *The Infantry Journal*, July-August, 1938 (XLV, 321-27). The new editor of *The Infantry Journal* asks greater consideration of the "most important section of military history . . . the socio-economic part which endeavors to integrate the development of armies and warfare with that of the state, industry and the ideology of the people."

William L. Calver, "Two Additional Belt Plates and Another Cartridge-Box Badge of the British Army in the American Revolution," in *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin*, July, 1938 (XXII, 88-95). Discoveries in a little-explored field of investigation.

Edward M. Earle, "American Military Policy and National Security," in *Political Science Quarterly*, March, 1938 (LIII, 1-13). Author finds conditions surrounding the formulation of the national military policy haphazard although involving important decisions of state.

Dallas D. Irvine, "The Origin of Capital Staffs," in *The Journal of Modern History*, June, 1938 (X, 161-79.) The first comprehensive summarization of the subject, well-documented and clarifying the meaning of the term "staff."

H. Oakes-Jones, "Photography in the Crimean War," in *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Summer, 1938 (XVII, 67-70) and Autumn 1938 (XVIII, 133-34). Describing the first use of photography in war-time; with excellent reproductions of photographs taken by Roger Fenton in the Crimea.

Charles J. Post, "Montauk, A Chronical of '98," in *The American Legion Magazine*, July 1938 (XXV, 3-7ff.). Exposé of conditions at Camp Wikoff, detention hospital at Montauk Point, New York, during the Spanish-American War.

Lt. Jack W. Rudolph, "Thunder in the East," in *The Infantry Journal*, July-August 1938 (XLV, 305-18). Concise résumé of military developments of the present Sino-Japanese War up to the end of its first year.

Edgar Snow, "China's Fighting Generalissimo," in *Foreign Affairs*, July 1938 (XVI, 612-25). Penetrating character sketch of Chiang Kai-Shek by one of the most authoritative first-hand observers of the Chinese political and military situation.

Rogers W. Young, "Castle Pickney, Silent Sentinel of Charleston Harbor," in *The South Carolina Historical and Geneological Magazine*, January 1938 (XXXIX, 1-14). Well-documented and interesting local history.



# THE MILITARY LIBRARY

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN WAR

By J. M. Scammell

*A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century*, by Sir Charles Oman. (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. 1937. Pp. 784. \$6.00.)

*The Art of War in Italy, 1494-1529*, by F. L. Taylor. (Cambridge: The University Press. 1921. Pp. 288.)

*The Letters and Documents of Armand de Gontaut Baron de Biron Marshal of France*, edited by Sidney Ehrman. 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1937. Pp. 809. \$7.50.)

The art and science of war requires for its successful application a comprehensive knowledge and the widest possible vision. Modern soldiers need a broader military background than is afforded by any single lifetime however well filled with even a great diversity of martial experiences. They require also a comprehensive grasp of the organization and functioning of the society in which they live; because today more than ever before war is waged, not by arms alone, but by states and nations with all their resources including those of the mind. The study of history can simplify the task of the soldier in a number of ways. A broad base enables one to sift the exceptional from the common experience, and so to make generalizations. "The greater the mass of laboratory results assembled, the greater the probability of reaching a safe conclusion."<sup>1</sup> Beginnings are especially helpful to study because they show the essential factors while the latter are still in a simple form. To understand things as they now are it is important to know how they came to be as they are. For these reasons students of military history will find it advantageous to examine the origins of modern warfare.

In theory much of this was understood and practiced by soldiers during the first quarter of this century; but they understood what they were trying to do only incompletely and were under the disadvantage of not knowing bad history from good or how to make use of it. It was under such conditions that a dubious

<sup>1</sup> Oliver L. Spaulding, *Pen and Sword in Greece and Rome* (Princeton, 1937).

doctrine of war was arrived at and defended—until the clash of arms exposed its shallowness and ineffectiveness during the surprises and defeats suffered by French Arms in 1914.<sup>2</sup> Without any detailed knowledge of the differences in social conditions which gave rise to them, Foch, following Clausewitz, repeatedly contrasted “the old fencing match . . . that war without a decisive solution of limited objective, war of maneuvering without fighting” with “war of movement and of shock action.”<sup>3</sup> Historically, this contrast is misleading and valueless. If the warriors of the sixteenth century maneuvered too much for the taste of soldiers in the early part of the twentieth, it may be that in part the modern taste was at fault. If they did not gain decisive battles, neither did the latter.

The soldiers of the sixteenth century are not to be sneered at. They were often able fellows. They formed the first modern standing army with professional leadership. They first differentiated troops into the arms and services as we know them now. They made the first intelligent experiments in the use of combined arms. They organized the first larger units of modern times, *tercios*, legions, regiments, and gave them appropriate commanders and staffs. The “cabo de coluna” or “coronel” became the modern colonel. Special auxiliary services, such as engineers, came into existence; and pontoon trains were used. The military uniform had its beginnings. The sixteenth century introduced the scientific study of war and saw the first military schools founded. Modern military literature was born, and schools of military thought arose.

Today it is possible for us to fix our attention on these pioneers, for at last we have available for study and contemplation the scholarly works which are listed at the head of this essay. Of the three, by far the broadest in scope and the most fruitful for soldiers is Sir Charles Oman's latest production. It is the most useful for soldiers because Sir Charles is not only a scholar but also a man of affairs. His *Art of War in the Middle Ages*, already a classic, furnishes him with a broad background in military history. In addition he has made a special study of military geography. He has been at pains to visit the scenes of many of the campaigns and actions which he describes. He is well fortified for his task by his work in the field of the general history of the sixteenth century. It is rarely that a military historian comes to his task as well equipped as Sir Charles Oman.

Mr. Taylor's work is limited in time and space. However, it is a useful complement to Sir Charles' book because of its more detailed treatment of the various arms and their use in combination. The two volume compilation by the late Sidney Ehrman provides laboratory materials not utilized by the other authors. Provided that the military student can read or is determined to read French sufficiently well to cope with the curious obsolete spellings used in the language as written in

<sup>2</sup> René Tournès, *L'histoire militaire* (Paris, 1922).

<sup>3</sup> *Des principes de la guerre* (Paris, 1917 [4th edition]), 26 and chapter 2, *passim*. See also the opening paragraph of his *De la conduite de la guerre*.

the sixteenth century, these volumes provide the equipment needed for a study of the beginnings of modern warfare.

Such a study, based on sound scholarship, may furnish a wholesome corrective against a number of misconceptions which are still widespread. It is commonly supposed that gunpowder wrought a revolution in the art of war. It did nothing of the kind; its influence became notable only after a long evolution. Modern pestiferous politicians have been alleged to be the bane of soldiers because of their interference in the conduct of war: they were pure and without blemish in comparison with their royal predecessors. And there is the complaint of dilatoriness and formalism laid against commanders which we can appreciate rightly only if we understand the conditions of society at the time.

The generals of the sixteenth century were faced with other difficulties. Their armies dwindled from lack of pay, rations, and equipment; and they melted from disease. The correspondence of Marshal Biron is full of his troubles from such sources. On June 13, 1586 he wrote to the Queen Mother, and the next day to the King in almost identical terms. To the King he said, "Sire, I have noticed that delays in war and long-drawn-out operations have ever been the ruination of armies, and above all I include money delays." Because he had no rations, no munitions, and no money, he was unable to move his command. On September 23 he begged to be relieved because he had been able to assemble only a quarter of the number of troops assigned to his army, and these were threatening to disband unless paid forthwith. Swiss mercenaries were especially undependable; because on a call from home, or if their pay became in arrears, off they would go. The threat of his Swiss to leave him unless he attacked, forced Lautrec into the disastrous attack at Bicocca in 1522.

The conduct of war in the sixteenth century was influenced also by the results of two conflicting systems coming into contact in Italy. In 1494 Charles VIII of France entered Italy with the first modern standing army, composed of 3,000 cavalry, 10,000 Gascon and Swiss infantry, and 6,000 Breton and Scots archers and crossbowmen. The first horse-drawn artillery train accompanied it. The French army swooped from Genoa, "cut up the squadrons of Naples, and put Rapallo to sack and pillage for entertaining them." All Italy was amazed, paralysed with horror, at war conducted on these bloodthirsty lines;<sup>4</sup> because:

The idea of being killed, except perhaps accidentally by being trampled underfoot in a rout . . . was terrible to people accustomed to battles which were processions, and sieges which were decorative occupations for gentlemen of leisure.<sup>5</sup>

The Italian system, based on professional mercenaries, was not unreasonable. Soldiers who fight for hire are not only reluctant to be killed, but they are often

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Baron Corvo, *A History of the Borgias* (New York, 1931), 132.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* The reference is to the Battle of Anghiari, a decisive battle which was famous throughout all Italy, in which the only casualty on either side was Ludovico degli Obizi who fell from his horse and was smothered in the mud.

loath to kill their former and perhaps future comrades on the other side. Maneuver furnished the excuse for preventing bloodshed: it became the formal convention that an army maneuvered into a position which would result in its destruction if battle were joined, could yield honorably. In order to avoid unnecessary toils and perils in war, condottieri made an exhaustive study of its theory, and their frequent and relatively bloodless campaigns gave them the means for testing these theories, much as today we test ours by maneuvers. This system, then, became pitted against the knock-down-and-drag-out system of Western Europe; and in time the disadvantages of each were discarded and a mean was struck between them. This process was aided by the influence of the Renaissance. The revival of the ancient learning placed at the disposal of soldiers the military writings of the Greeks and Romans which were followed blindly and without discrimination by the second-raters and intelligently by the first-raters up to the days of Napoleon.

Gifted military thinkers were seeking various ways out of the morass created by the growing power of the defensive. One solution lay in a recognition of the limitations of the various arms and in attempts to make each supplement the others through combined action in accordance with a definitely planned and co-ordinated attack, as in the battles of Pavia, Marignano, and Ravenna. In the first the attempt was unsuccessful. In the last, a twenty-three year old amateur, Gaston de Foix, had the imagination and the daring to disregard all prevailing theories and practices and to adapt his means to a specific problem. He succeeded brilliantly, only to lose his life through the reckless valor of his pursuit. Had he learned the proper place for a general in battle, he might have become the greatest soldier of his day. In contrast one might mention another amateur, Ambrogio de Spinola, an Italian merchant prince who occupied his leisure with a profound study of the art of war. He raised his own army, offered his services to the King of Spain, marched his army to the Netherlands, and defeated decisively the outstanding soldiers of the time.

Perhaps the ablest of the military leaders in those days was Gonsalvo de Cordova. He was the master of a rich variety of military qualities. He was remarkable for his singleness of purpose, his skillful administration, his genius for organization, his ingenuity for adapting his means to his end, and the daring of his imagination. Inferior in numbers, money, food, and in munitions, he destroyed the French armies in Italy and added the Kingdom of Naples to the Spanish Crown. Defeated in his first general action, he sought and developed a new system of tactics: he dug in; and when the enemy wavered, he counter attacked. His exploitation of victory was relentless. He used his light cavalry as a screen, before the battle, to gain information and to deny it to the enemy; and after the battle he used it to harass and disorganize the beaten foe.

At the time when infantry was becoming the most important arm, the name of Gonsalvo de Cordova was inseparably associated with the development of the Spanish infantry, which was destined to become the best in the world. Previously



this reputation had been won and long held by the Swiss infantry, which had mastered the problem of maneuvering pikemen in close formation. Massive Swiss battalions, sometimes 10,000 strong, could, however, maneuver only an unbroken ground, and had only an insignificant proportion of missile weapons. It became the pattern for the German landsknechts and the militia of the Italian city states.

The situation was changed by improvements in hand firearms. At first, owing to its short range, inaccuracy, and slow rate of fire, the hackbut<sup>6</sup> was especially effective in the defense of towns or sheltered behind obstacles in terrain unsuited to the use of solid phalanxes of pikemen on the Swiss model. This and a variety of other influences led to the development in Spain of a superior type of infantry. Everywhere the foot soldier was on the ascendant. The Spanish borrowed from the Swiss. The Renaissance set soldiers to studying the infantry organizations and tactics of the ancients. In Spain, as a result of warring against the Moors, infantry had become supreme independently of developments elsewhere. Finally Spain had the organizing genius of El Grande Capitán.

It seems strange that none of the authors cited in this article have emphasized the independent Spanish developments. Yet there existed in Spain an ancient tradition which must have had a powerful effect in creating that mobility and flexibility which gave to the Spanish infantry its supremacy. This tradition appears to have had its roots at least as far back as the beginning of the Christian era, for we find Diodorus Siculus reporting that

The Iberians . . . are singular in one thing they do: for those that are young and prest for want, but yet are strong and courageous, get together upon the Tops of the Mountains, and furnish themselves with Arms; and having made up a considerable body, make Incursions into Iberia, and heap up riches by Thieving and Robbery; and this is their constant Practice in despite of all hazards whatsoever; for being lightly arm'd and nimble of Foot, they are not easily surpriz'd.

The Moorish invasions renewed such practices. Dispossessed Christians and Moslem renegades took refuge in the mountains and carried on a hazardous and relentless guerrilla warfare. Lightly armed, they became renowned for the celerity of their movements and the swiftness and audacity of their attacks. Their expertness with their crude weapons was deadly. In 1282 a company of these "Almugavares" made a six-days' march to Palermo in three days. The people of Messina, after a small body had made a sortie against the French and slew numbers equal to their total strength, rated each as the equal of two armed knights. In 1285, near Rosas, a band of 200 routed the French chivalry. The Almugavares broke short their lances and disembowelled the horses of the French knights; and "they went about among them as if they were walking in a garden."<sup>7</sup> So formidable

<sup>6</sup> The English form of the German word *hackenbüchse*, which the French rendered as *arquebuse* and the Italians as *archibuso* or *archibugio*. There seems to be no good reason why the French form should be used in preference to the forthright English form.

<sup>7</sup> Muntaner, *Chronicle*. lxii, lxiv, cxxiv, cxc.

were they that in 1284 the Lord King En Pedro of Aragon ordained that there be 20,000 of these Almugavares on all his frontiers, and 8,000 bowmen from the mountains.

The infantry reforms of Gonsalvo de Cordova clearly reflect this native tradition, in organization, in armament, and in tactics. His footmen were armed as follows: one half with short pikes, one sixth with firearms, and the remainder with swords and daggers. The fight was opened with missiles; then came the push of pike. Whenever a breach was made, the swordsmen swarmed in to disorganize and demoralize the enemy. It was a formidable combination. It was made even more so by the adoption of a heavier pike and a more extensive exploitation of the missile power of small firearms. In 1502-1503 the great Spanish engineer Pedro Navarro defended Camosa against a vastly superior French force under Nemours, by 500 pikemen and 200 hackbuteers. By 1521 portable firearms had definitely proved their power on the battlefield, especially in sieges and street fighting, but even offensively in the open. About this time the Spanish introduced an improved type of hand gun called the musket. By this time also the proportion of hackbuteers to pikemen had risen as high as one third the total number of infantry. In addition the Germans had introduced a hand-hackbut, and the *streubüchsen*, or primitive machine guns made their appearance; Pedro Navarro invented a kind of tank armed with them. Infantry was well on its way to supremacy when the skeptic Machiavelli admitted it to be "the nerve of an army;" but it had definitely arrived when, in 1582, a marshal of France, Biron, dismounted two of his sons to fight in the forefront of battle with the foot.

Artillery also was rapidly coming to the fore. In mobility, in rapidity of fire, and in the flexibility of direction of fire, the French gunners led. It was they who first adopted permanent gun carriages and specially trained artillery draft horses. By 1512 the Battle of Ravenna was decided by the guns.

In comparison, cavalry generally suffered; although light cavalry began to grow in popularity. Between 1494 and 1528 the proportion of cavalry in an army dwindled from two thirds to one eleventh; and Machiavelli considered that one twentieth was enough. Light cavalry included the Spanish *genitors* who, like the Huguenot cavalry, were armed with the lance, and Stradiots from the Balkans, popular because of their extreme mobility. Light cavalry were used to provide security and information, to raid communications cutting up detachments and convoy escorts, and to harass the enemy and draw pursuers into ambush. By foraging they helped to supply an army on the march. Mounted infantry also came into favor. Henry of Navarre used considerable numbers of *harquebusiers à cheval* in 1586 to surprise enemy troops scattered for shelter and ease of supply. Giovanni de' Medici rediscovered a combination which Napoleon revived after him under the name of *voltigeurs*. They were used to move troops rapidly to or on the battlefield.

In brief, the soldiers of the sixteenth century were seeking an answer to the

problems created by the growth of defensive power; and they were seeking it where modern soldiers are seeking it: in mobility and flexibility. To this end, for ease of maneuver, units were reduced in size and smaller units were grouped into higher tactical units. The unwieldy *tercio* and the still more clumsy Swiss battalion gave way to the regiment. Armies began to develop staffs. In 1586 Biron, a "Cappitaine de 50 hommes d'armes" and "Grand maistre et cappitaine général de . . . l'artillerie," had an independent command. On his staff, in addition to a *maréchal de camp de cavallerie*, a *sergent de bataille*, and a *commis due contrôleur général des guerres*, he had a personal secretary, a secretary and finance intendant, an engineer, a physician, a surgeon, a druggist, and a chaplain.

To expedite the movements of an army auxiliary services were organized. In 1572 Biron was authorized to receive a company of fifty pioneers recruited by Pierre Sixlivres, to wit: "Ung cappitaine, une enseigne, troys cherpentiers, ung tabourin," to be attached to the artillery and its train. They were uniformed in a cap and shoes of green cloth, red breeches, and in jackets with white crosses sewn on fore and aft. In 1582 he had a pontoon train.

The problems of the sixteenth century soldier were less complex than those of today; but they had to overcome far greater physical obstacles with strictly limited resources. No student of military history can read the works cited above without gaining a keen appreciation of their difficulties, their achievements, and their contributions to the development of modern warfare.

\* \* \*

*The Last Spanish War: Revelations in "Diplomacy,"* by Orestes Ferrera. (New York: The Paisley Press, Inc. 1937. Pp. 154. \$1.50.)

It is surprising that historians of the Monroe Doctrine, even the most recent ones, who have had access to the archives of the Department of State, have not given more careful study to the abortive attempt of the European powers to intervene between the United States and Spain in 1898. It is of course recorded in every study of the diplomatic history of the Spanish-American War that the ambassadors of the six great powers of Europe presented on April 7, 1898, a note to President McKinley stating that they hoped for humanity's sake that the Cuban question could be solved peaceably, that Great Britain had consented to this step only after inquiring beforehand from the United States government whether it would be acceptable, and that President McKinley had answered the representation by saying that he too hoped war could be avoided, but that if the United States were obliged to intervene in Cuba it would be for humanity's sake that it did so. There has been some reference in the historiography of the subject to a projected second note, concocted by the ambassadors after the resolution for war had passed the House of Representatives, a note which would have branded intervention as unjustifiable, a note which was never delivered because

the powers (except Austria) overruled their ambassadors. These activities at Washington reflected Spain's frantic efforts to induce the powers to save her last American colony, Cuba, just as in 1823 she had endeavored to get the Holy Alliance to intervene for the restoration of her continental colonies. In 1898 the powers hesitated to brook the United States and the Monroe Doctrine, just as in 1823 France declined to challenge England's ultimatum against intervention in Hispanic America.

Mr. Ferrera, a distinguished Cuban statesman, has endeavored to get at the bottom of this European *démarche* by consulting the archives of the powers concerned. He has had full access to the American and Spanish archives, has studied the German documents so copiously published in the series *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinete*, and has been furnished *précis*, and extracts, from the French and Italian archives although he was not allowed to consult them personally. He failed to secure access to the Austrian, English, or Russian unprinted records. The result of his labors, if not absolutely definitive, is a very important contribution to diplomatic history, the fullest and most detailed account that we have of this interesting incident. He traces the development of Spain's effort from the memorandum of the Spanish minister of foreign affairs, in 1896, pleading intervention by the powers, a memorandum never formally delivered because of its inopportune discovery by the American minister in Madrid, Hannis Taylor.

The reasons for the failure of intervention in 1898 were similar to the reasons for failure in 1823: the powers were too preoccupied with their own concerns and issues in Europe and Asia and Africa to be able to agree on joint measures in America. Particularly England was anxious not to offend the United States whose assistance she was courting for the solution of the Empire's troubles in the Old World. Queen Victoria, however, wanted to help the Spanish Queen, who appealed personally to her; and Mr. Ferrera thinks that Lord Pauncefote's initiative and participation in the drafting of the second obnoxious note (never delivered) may be explained by some influence of the Queen, who was overruled in the end by the advice of her ministers.

Mr. Ferrera's style, if a little overstudied with diplomatic maxims of his own conjuring, is interesting and lively. The documents he quotes are first-hand and important: and his contribution must henceforth be noted in any diplomatic history of the United States or of the Monroe Doctrine.

SAMUEL F. BEMIS

Yale University

*And So to War*, by Hubert Herring. (New Haven: The Yale University Press. 1938. Pp. 178. \$2.00.)

Mr. Herring probably would prefer being called an "enlightened" isolationist. The enlightenment, if so, is by John Bassett Moore out of Edwin Borchard, the ideas and prejudices of whom he passes on with a pamphleteer's vengeance.



Many of the ideas are good. One suggestion by Mr. Herring is that the president's power in the conduct of foreign relations be restricted by Congress. The subtle steps by which a president may lead the nation to war would be checked, he feels, if a standing Congressional committee were to give its "counsel and consent" in the matter of commitments, declarations of policy, or important notes. Others have insisted that the presidency has gradually abrogated too much power in this direction, beginning long before Woodrow Wilson, and that greater popular control would be more consonant with democracy. Neutrality legislation was a step in this direction and more legislation seems imminent, considering the sentiment revealed by the Lemke proposal for a war referendum. Herring's pamphleteering in the cause of greater popular control, however, probably would be more successful if it did not depend so much on a violent dislike for Wilson, the English, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

WAYNE C. GROVER

*The National Archives*

*The Story of Reconstruction, 1865-1877*, By Robert Selph Henry. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1938. Pp. 633. \$5.00.)

The historiography of the Reconstruction period has produced a number of clashing interpretations. For thirty years after the close of the Civil War the Radical Republican viewpoint prevailed. This interpretation, expressed for the most part by journalists and literary politicians, painted Reconstruction as an attempt of the North to force good government and high ideals upon the defeated but still rebellious South. The Reconstruction acts endeavored to secure justice and equality for the negroes and poor whites, to further education, and to raise the moral standard of the South. These laudable aims, this school of writers claimed, were defeated by the contumacy of the Southerners, who terrorized the blacks into submission and enlisted the support of the allegedly incapable and drunken Andrew Johnson. After 1900 a new interpretation of Reconstruction came to the fore. Professor W. A. Dunning of Columbia and his seminar published a series of monographs dealing with the formulation of Reconstruction policies by the Republican party and with the processes of Reconstruction in each of the Southern states. These studies were signal contributions and struck much nearer the truth than the wholly partisan accounts of the preceding years. Yet they contained serious defects. Their emphasis was chiefly political rather than social and economic. They tended to catalogue, without adequate analysis, a series of laws, constitutions, and conventions. The dominant interest of the authors was in events in the South; Reconstruction as a national policy was neglected. More serious, the Dunning school was nearly as positive, in an opposite direction, as the Radical Republicans. They delineated Reconstruction as a Republican attempt to insure political control of the nation by dominating the prostrate South. According to this view, the "black and tan" legislatures were composed of ignorant negroes and designing whites who used their power to

ruin the South economically. Although the Southern whites eventually regained supremacy, race relations were permanently embittered. Andrew Johnson emerged as a courageous leader battling the hate-motivated, corrupt Republican machine. This interpretation persisted, and culminated in the 1920's with the publication of books by Bowers, Milton, and Winston. More recently revisionist historians have insisted on altering this picture of Reconstruction. Nevins in *The Emergence of Modern America* and Woody and Simkins in *Reconstruction in South Carolina* have demonstrated that the Reconstruction legislatures accomplished much of lasting good. It is now recognized that all the good, or the evil, was not confined to one section or party. Social and economic, not political, aspects receive the major emphasis in the new interpretation.

Mr. Henry's book is in the Dunning tradition. Based mainly on published sources and monographs, it has the virtues and the defects of other works of the same school. The story is exceedingly well written and moves along at a smooth pace. Dramatic interest is well sustained, but political history receives the major share of attention. Reconstruction in the South overshadows events in Washington. While the author is more moderate than some of his predecessors, he sees Republicans, negroes, scalawags, and carpetbaggers as representatives of corruption and ignorance. Correspondingly he sees the native Southerners fighting a battle for intelligence, honesty, and good government. Like the Radical Republicans and the Dunning-Bowers group, Mr. Henry makes his story too dogmatic and simple. He does not achieve the needed balance between the two interpretations which is necessary for a correct impression of the period.

The book contains a short bibliography, but no footnotes.

HARRY WILLIAMS

*University of Wisconsin*

*The Bannock Indian War of 1878*, by George Francis Brimlow. (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers. 1938. Pp. 241. \$2.50.)

The Bannock Indian War has attracted little attention, perhaps because the troops were well handled and there was small loss of life. This first extended treatment of it is far too brief to be definitive, but the treatment is suggestive and for that reason many of its faults may be forgiven.

Mr. Brimlow traces the movements of General O. O. Howard's forces company by company and troop by troop, throughout the campaign, but more complete accounts of the fights to which these movements tended would have been welcome. There is some detail on the activities of the Indian tribes and their ultimate disposal. Discussion of the causes of the war—the usual violated treaty and white encroachment—seems adequate.

It probably interested Mr. Brimlow, who has had some experience with printing, to learn that the war started over a typographical error. The Treaty of 1868 reserved the Camas Prairie to the Bannocks. Through carelessness it was written "Kansas Prairie"—a term which was meaningless. When the hogs

of the settlers were turned loose on the camas roots, a preferred article of Bannock diet, the Indians took to the warpath.

Despite this warning of the dire consequences to be expected, there are a number of annoying typographical errors and stylistic indiscretions in the book, particularly in the use of parentheses for brackets.

With such colorful figures as General Howard, Captain Evan Miles, Captain Bernard, Buffalo Horn, Oytes, "Rube" Robbins, and the Indian heroine, Sarah Winnemucca (who, we regret to learn, had not the sylph-like form of the Indian maidens featured on calendars), to say nothing of the Washington Territorial Navy, manned by the Ordnance Department, there is much more human interest than is effectively utilized.

Much of Mr. Brimlow's material has been assembled from contemporary sources and obscure publications. An excellent map loses some of its usefulness by being made an end paper.

DON RUSSELL

*Chicago, Illinois*

*Machine Guns: Their History and Tactical Employment*, by Lt. Col. Graham Seton Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C. (London and New York: Macmillan. 1938. Pp. 342. \$7.00.)

To the student of military principles this volume will prove an interesting philosophical study. It does not deal directly with the principles of command, tactics, or strategy, nor is it a treatise on matériel, although the subject is machine guns. Rather it is a deep-rooted study into the problem of prying open the house of time-proven tactical conceptions and of making welcome therein as an honored member of the family the products of the march of science. The medium used by the author is the machine gun. He might have delayed a few years, and have used the tank, airplane, semi-automatic rifle, or long range light field guns, tools of more recent development; or mechanization in general, and his narrative would have differed only in details. It would still be the struggle between the technician and the tactician.

To the mechanician who reads this volume the solidarity of the tactical mind may appear to be pure obstinance, jealousy and imprudence, but sight should not be lost of the fact that mistakes in war may be paid for by the loss of a country, and any move toward upsetting the methods which the ages have proved and approved is no light matter. It has been said recently that to lose an engagement with battleships is to suffer loss of prestige; but to lose a battle with planes, there being no ships, is to lose the nation.

To the soldier who studies this volume there will be brought to mind afresh the possibilities of the scientific engineer in the tactical realm, and a reminder of his responsibility for seeking to adjust his tactics to the products of science.

Colonel Hutchison does not bear to the machine gun the same relationship

that Swinton bears to the tank. He was not the originator of any machine gun, nor does he make any claim in the development of machine gun technique. He approaches the subject as a chronicler and interpreter, recording his personal observations and studies of the history of the machine gun in its struggle for perfection and recognition. He has spread on the record the pertinent facts which for many decades promoted the development of the weapon, and the adverse factors which delayed its general use until the latter part of the World War. The reader may draw his own conclusions as to why this "nerveless weapon," the most lethal of all weapons, failed of recognition for so many years. The author's observations are that the mechanical imperfections were not the cause of the delay, but rather the failure of commanders, high and low, to appreciate its proper use.

Historically the mechanical development of the machine gun is traced from ancient times up to the days of Gatling, Browning and others of recent machine gun fame. Concurrently there is recorded the tragic history of its use and misuse. No one individual is given credit for the eventual discovery of the rôle of this gun, but splendid tribute is paid to Lt. John Henry ("Gatling Gun") Parker, U. S. Army, for the publication of his observations on the proper use of machine guns as a result of his Spanish War experience with the Gatling Gun. From that time forward tactical use of the gun prospered in a sense, being greatly accentuated by the Russo-Japanese War. Yet, not until the latter part of the World War does it appear that the weapon lost its identity as a *gun* and became an *institution of war*. Then it ceased to be a mere weapon of opportunity and became an arm. Its unparalleled height of indispensability climaxed according to the author, with the creation in the British army of the "Machine Gun Corps," a separate force.

Aside from the development of the machine gun and its correct tactical use, a very noteworthy distinction is made between machine guns and machine rifles, sometimes referred to as light machine guns. The latter, the author assigns to the Infantry as excellent weapons for anti-machine gun work, infiltration and close-in protection. They are in no sense machine guns, no more than machine guns are artillery, according to the author, which interpretation is of current interest in the light of the recent arming of Cavalry troops of the U. S. Army with light machine guns.

The book leaves in the mind some question of Command. With these guns in a separate force, controlled by the higher echelons of command, but invariably employed in unit fighting areas it is difficult to see how proper coordination, under the usual system of command, may be accomplished, especially at a time and place where there is "no discipline . . . only mutual consent." This may still be a problem for the tactician.

LT. COL. J. H. WOODBURY, U. S. A.

*Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff*



*Sword, Lance & Bayonet. A Record of the Arms of the British Army & Navy*, by Charles ffoulkes and Captain E. C. Hopkinson. (Cambridge: at The University Press; New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938. Pp. 143. \$5.00.)

One of the most worthwhile products of current British interests in the antiquities and history of their army is the book on its small arms by Dr. ffoulkes, Master of Armouries at the Tower of London, and Captain Hopkinson. No dissertation this on the painted lances of feudal knights or the thin rapiers of *mousquetaires*, rather is it the story of the common weapons of the more or less modern British soldier, his issue arms from the seventeenth century to the present day. The axes and broadswords of medieval times have found permanent resting places in many an art museum but the utilitarian weapons of more recent times, lacking the artistic appeal, have been the recipients of nowhere near as much attention. Actual examples are badly scattered, oftentimes entirely missing or buried in transitory private collections. Only those who have had to trace the lineage of a regulation weapon can appreciate the labor which has gone into the ffoulkes-Hopkinson book and the great value it will prove to all sincere collectors and antiquarians.

Much of this value, and it is this fact which puts the work head and shoulders above others of its kind, is due to the use its authors have made of documentary sources as well as the physical testimony offered by the actual weapons. Of course, the wealth of indirect evidence in this field (orderly books, personal narratives and the like) is enormous and the present authors have been wise in restricting themselves in the main to direct sources. Most of their material has been taken from dress and equipment regulations, reports of ordnance commissions, and contemporary official illustrations. Such scattered references as exist to the actual employment of these arms in service (for example, the fact that only two Russian gunners were killed by sword cuts at Balaclava) are usually based on testimony given before government boards. More depth and color would have been gained through a fuller use of unofficial sources but it is quite probable that, in so doing, the size of the book would have gotten out of hand.

Enough of the weapons described have played a part in our own wars to make the story of real interest to Americans. Nevertheless, one is impressed by a somewhat "insular" treatment; once the British soldier has left England his arms and equipment appear to become of minor importance. In the reviewer's opinion it is just these changes, forced by the exigencies of service in foreign lands, that are so very interesting and important to trace. We can only hope that someday this can be accomplished and that the present authors will be able to do this job.

FREDERICK P. TODD.

*The National Archives*

# NOTES AND ANTIQUITIES

## UNIFORM OF THE BLACK WATCH IN AMERICA, 1776-1783

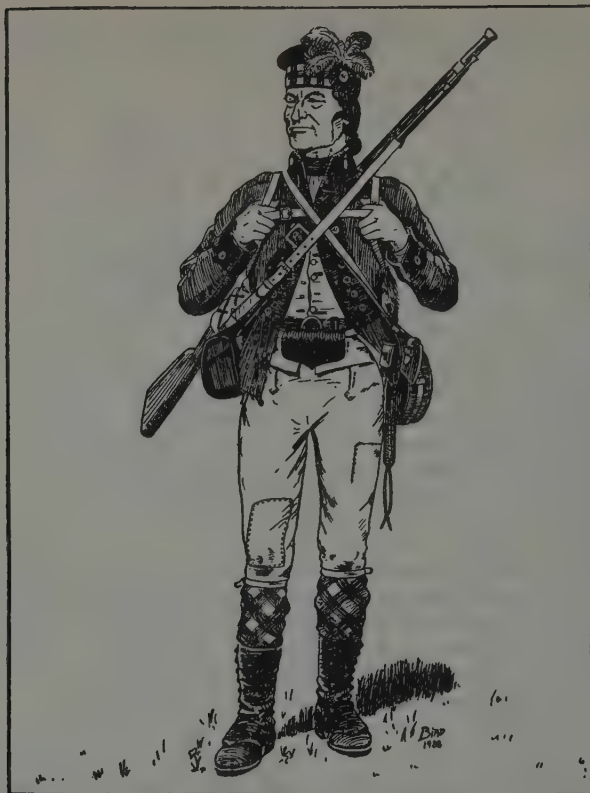
Few British regiments are better known to Americans than The Black Watch and few have seen as much service in this hemisphere. It campaigned against the French from Ticonderoga to Martinique, it fought the Indians up and down the Alleghenies, and, during the Revolution, saw constant action from 1776 to the end. It was in this last war that The Black Watch relinquished for at least once in history its most distinctive article of dress, the kilt—a sacrifice to the underbrush and brambles of the American landscape.

When the organization, officially then the 42nd, or Royal Highland, Regiment of Foot, landed on Staten Island in 1776 its private battalion soldiers were dressed in short coats of red trimmed with blue, white vests, bonnets ornamented with a red and white "diced" band and some sort of feathers, rough kilts of the old "belted-plaid" pattern with the "Black Watch" tartan, white goats-skin purses or "sporans," red and white checked cloth stockings, and low buckled shoes. Their armament included a musket, bayonet, broadsword and pistol; their equipment, a cartridge box worn in front of the body, a broad belt of black leather over the right shoulder from which hung the sword, a knapsack and a haversack.<sup>1</sup> Gradually this was altered until by the middle of the war the men were uniformed and equipped as shown in the accompanying illustration.

This new dress has been described as being "the same as the British Regiments of Infantry that have short coats, except that they continue to wear the Bonnet."<sup>2</sup> The sword was replaced by the handier hatchet and the sword belt now supported an additional cartridge box. The pistols had disappeared and the white breeches worn by the rest of the infantry had supplanted the familiar kilt and purse. It was in this uniform that it was inspected in 1784 at Halifax.

<sup>1</sup> Great Britain, War Office, MS inspection return, 42nd Foot, May 30, 1775, and Royal Warrant, December 19, 1768, reprinted in *Jour. Army Historical Research*, V (1926), 27; I. H. Mackay Scobie, "Highland Military Dress," *ibid.*, I (1921-22), 44-55; I. H. Mackay Scobie and R. F. K. Wallace, "Black Watch Uniform," *ibid.*, XIII (1934), 121-23; Great Britain, Treasury, MS list of clothing to be admitted into Ireland duty free, January 14, 1773, reprinted in *ibid.*, XIV (1935), 217; Charles M. Lefferts, *Uniforms of the American, British, French, and German Armies in the War of the American Revolution* (New York, 1926), 164, 182-90.

<sup>2</sup> MS, "List of Officers . . .," in New-York Historical Society.



UNIFORM OF THE BLACK WATCH AS ADOPTED FOR SERVICE IN  
NORTH AMERICA, 1776-1783

There is good reason to believe that at times some of the men wore the common brown or blue fatigue overalls and that other variations were allowed, but it is quite apparent that the famous tartan was laid aside until some time after the regiment had left the United States.<sup>3</sup>

HARRISON K. BIRD

### FIRST "STEAM" GUN IN ACTION

March 10, 1863, Jacksonville, Florida, was occupied by Federal forces under cover of their gunboats on the St. Johns River. These were colored troops com-

<sup>3</sup> Great Britain, War Office, MS inspection return, 42nd Foot, June 9, 1784, reprinted in *Jour. Army Historical Research*, V (1926), 27; deserter descriptions 1779, reprinted in Lefferts, *Uniforms*, 164; Charles Foulkes and E. C. Hopkinson, *Sword, Lance & Bayonet* (Cambridge, 1938), 74, 75.

manded by white officers comprising the 1st South Carolina Volunteers and a part of the 2nd South Carolina Volunteers. March 22 and 23 two white regiments arrived—the 8th Maine and the 6th Connecticut.

Several companies of General Joseph Finegan's Florida troops were encamped near the railroad about ten miles west of Jacksonville. They were principally cavalry or mounted infantry and were inadequately provided with artillery. Skirmishing began immediately after the occupation with sudden attacks by the Confederates upon outposts, pickets and foraging parties. March 17, General Finegan notified Colonel Higginson to remove the women and children from the town or assume responsibility for their safety. All were promptly evacuated except a few families that refused to leave.

The evacuation notice was preliminary to a contemplated bombardment of the Federal encampment in Jacksonville by a 32-pounder rifled gun mounted on a railroad flat car to be backed by a locomotive to the western outskirts of the town. The plan was devised by Lieutenant Thomas E. Buckman, chief of ordnance under General Finegan. The concept was carried out after midnight, March 25th. Private Francis Sollee of the 1st Special Battalion, Florida Volunteers, commanded the gun detachment. The bombardment of the Federal position was opened at a distance of one and a half miles.

A vivid contemporary account of the damage by this gun at and near Jacksonville was written by Dr. Alfred Walton, medical officer of the 8th Maine; his diary reads:

Wednesday, March 25, 1863: At 3:30 this morning the rebels came down on the railroad and opened on the town [Jacksonville] with an 8-inch rifled gun. The first shot went through an unoccupied house next to our medical headquarters and exploded, turning us all out in a hurry. Just as I got out of doors the second one broke over our heads. The third one struck the roof of a house where a Union man and his wife were sleeping; the shell passed through the side of the house and imbedded itself eight feet in the ground without exploding. Several of us dug out the shell and found it to be an 8-inch rifle of English manufacture. They got seven of these shells into the town before our gunboats got a range on them, when they beat a retreat.

After guard mounting this morning four companies of the Eighth Maine, three of the Sixth Connecticut, and three of the negro regiment started out to tear up the railroad track to prevent the rebels from getting near enough with their steam gun to shell us. We had a 4-inch rifle gun mounted on a small flat car and shoved it by hand. When four miles out we began to tear up the track and just then the rebels made their appearance down the track with an engine and a large 8-inch gun on a flat car and they at once opened on us. The first shot struck in the center of the track just short of where Captain McArthur and myself stood, exploded and a large piece of the butt of the shell ricocheted to the right, making a high curve, cut off the top of a tall pine tree, and fell into the ranks of Company I, Eighth Maine, who were marching in four ranks by the right shoulder shift on a piece of plank road. It struck the musket barrel of Thomas Hoole of Brunswick, Me., taking off his head. Passing to the next rank it took off the shoulder of Joseph Goodwin, of Lyman, Me.—he lived two hours. Passing to the next rank it took off the leg below the knee of another man. I soon had the ambulance at work. Hiding the piece of shell under the plank road, turning over the planks that had blood on them, and scattering soil over the spot, we very quickly obliterated all signs of anyone being hurt. We got back to town at 3 p. m., with no further loss.



This was probably the first actual use of a "railroad battery" in warfare in American history. Accounts of the Confederate experiment were undoubtedly sent North by the Union officers, and may have found expression in the railroad gun mounts used by the Federal army around Richmond a year afterwards mentioned by E. G. Campbell in the Summer 1938 number of the *Journal*, pages 83-84.

T. FREDERICK DAVIS

### SHAKO PLATE OF THE REGIMENT OF RIFLEMEN

The writer, while engaged in research into the history of Fort Atkinson, Nebraska, has had brought to his attention many items recalling the dress, equipment and daily life of the troops who occupied this post from 1819 to 1827. A particularly interesting example is a unique specimen of the plate worn on the high, bell-crowned leather caps of the Riflemen of this period which is now in the collection of the Washington County, Nebraska, Historical Museum. This plate was discovered on the site of the Fort about thirty years ago. It is shown in the accompanying illustration, furnished through the courtesy of the Museum.

The Regiment of Riflemen was raised in 1808. In 1814, under the act of February 10, three additional regiments were organized, the original unit becoming the 1st Regiment of Riflemen; but on May 17, 1815, the four regiments were consolidated and were once more designated The Regiment of Riflemen. The unit was abolished in 1821. Since the plate bears the legend "1 REGt" it would appear to date from about 1814, and the fact that it was found at Fort Atkinson indicates that it continued to be worn up to the time of the disbanding of the unit.

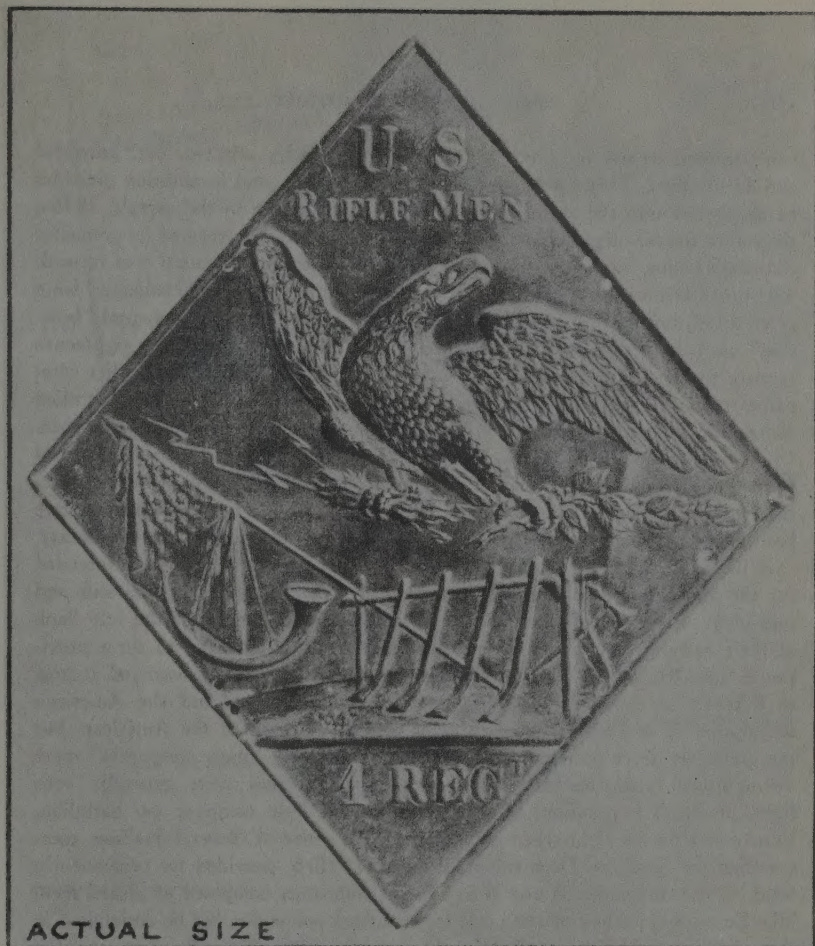
The plate is of peculiar interest in itself because its emblems include almost every object symbolic of the rifleman. In addition to the usual eagle and a national color there is a French horn, the insignia of light infantry in all the armies of Europe. Not content with these emblems, the die maker added a row of rifles, unquestionably intended to represent the regulation Model 1800 weapon which was carried by the Regiment, while from a corner of the rack hang two other standard parts of the rifleman's equipment, a tomahawk and a hunting, or, as it was still called, a scalping knife. Only the fringed jacket is missing.

VIRGIL NEY

### QUERIES

29. INSIGNIA OF A CORNET. The Headquarters Troop, 52nd Cavalry Brigade, Pennsylvania National Guard (First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry) is authorized to retain, as one of its ancient privileges, a cornet as an additional commissioned officer. What insignia of rank does the cornet wear on the shoulder loops of his O. D. uniform?

F. B. W.



ACTUAL SIZE

30. **INSIGNIA OF A MILITARY STOREKEEPER.** The Act of August 29, 1916, authorized the appointment in the Regular Army of a Military Storekeeper. The National Defense Act, as amended in 1920, continued the office, and provided that the Military Storekeeper should have the rank, pay, and allowances of a major. What branch insignia did this officer wear?

F. B. W.

#### REPLIES

25. **GRENADIERS.** In the seventeenth century, siege craft formed a large part of the military art. In this, the attacker worked his way slowly, by "sapping," close up to the defenders' works. Being at such close quarters, and both in trenches, a new weapon was devised, the hand grenade, and special detachments



were formed to use it. The grenadiers were specially selected, big, powerful and daring men. They carried full infantry equipment, and in addition grenades to be pitched into the enemy's trenches and axes for use in the assault. Before the end of the century every battalion in most European services had its grenadier company, taking the post of honor on the right when the battalion was formed. The broad-brimmed hat being in the way when throwing, these companies were given a tall, brimless cap, which has developed into the purely ornamental "bear-skin" worn by certain special units even now. By the middle of the eighteenth century the hand grenade had gone out of practical use, but the grenadier companies remained as the élite of the infantry, distinguished from the "battalion companies" by special items of dress and equipment and the height of their men. In field operations they were habitually detached from their battalions and formed into provisional grenadier battalions or even regiments. In some cases these grenadier units have become permanent; and even horse grenadiers have been formed in some countries, the designation being, of course, purely honorary.

A little later than the grenadiers, there developed "light companies," intended for the service of security and information, for the line infantry was stiff and unwieldy. These companies took the place of second honor, on the left flank of their battalions, and like the grenadiers were often detached to form provisional light battalions. This development in the British Army occurred largely as a result of experience in the American colonial wars and the American Revolution. The English system was, of course, the basis of the American, but the grenadier never found much favor here, and where "flank companies" were distinguished from the battalion companies at all, they were generally both light. Steuben's Regulations of 1779 provided one light company per battalion, to take post on the right when not detached. An order of General Jackson, commanding the Southern Department, August 21, 1816, provided for permanently lettering the companies, A and B to be light companies composed of picked men. The Eustis Regulations of 1812 call for two flank companies "to be designated as grenadiers or light infantry." War Department G.O. No. 28, 1825, specifies the right flank company as grenadiers; and J. Holbrook in his *Military Tactics* (Middletown, Conn., 1826) lists the requirements for men of grenadier companies "should the President order one per regiment to assume this designation." Light companies are occasionally mentioned, even as late as the Mexican War, but grenadiers seem to have completely disappeared long before this. In the World War the term reappeared in its old sense; but all infantry troops were given training in throwing the grenade, and as a rule no special units were organized for the purpose.

Further information on grenadiers may be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in the *Century Dictionary*, in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique* (Paris and Liège, 1784) and in numerous other reference books.

OLIVER L. SPAULDING